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THEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION:

OR,

DISSERTATIONS

CONTAINING SUGGESTIONS FOR A

SYSTEM OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION,

BASED ON

CATHOLIC-EVANGELIC OR BROAD-CHURCH
PRINCIPLES.

THE INTRODUCTION

BY

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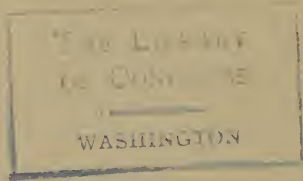
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CONTENTS.

I. PREFACE.

II. INTRODUCTION.

III. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

IV. THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

V. SIN.

VI. THE INCARNATION.

VII. THE ATONEMENT

VIII. JUSTIFICATION.

IX. THE CHURCH.



PREFACE.

IT is clear that the Christian Faith must now be maintained by new arguments and new expositions of its first principles. The numerous and wonderful revelations of science have, so to speak, furnished new eyes to the understanding, and cleared the intellectual horizon far and wide. We breathe an entirely new, scientific, moral, intellectual and religious atmosphere. The old arguments and persuasions which once sufficed to establish and perpetuate popular religious convictions, have no longer any influence on the great mass of intelligent and thoughtful men. For centuries the teachings of Theologians have been in the highest subject of human thought miserably in discord with reason and fact. The old modes of thought, like the old conceptions, are fast becoming obsolete. Christian truth and life in the Church can only be saved by the revindication and reassertion of the fundamentals of the faith in a form adapted to the new state of thought. To further this end these Dissertations have been compiled and material gathered from every source and form found convenient. All lovers of the truth will gladly welcome every movement tending to clear the faith once delivered to the saints from the conventional glosses which now obscure it, and to set it forth in its primitive purity, simplicity and attractiveness. Let it be understood that there is no attempt within the nar-

row limits of these "DISSERTATIONS"—which should be read in course to be justly comprehended,—to explain in all their varied aspects the several doctrines treated, or to defend revealed religion. The intention is simply to emphasize and point out inconsistencies in current theology, and to give *hints and suggestions* along a certain line of thought, for a system more in accord with modern ideas and feeling. Much of our standard theology is like an old field that must be ploughed and planted again, that it may yield an ampler and better harvest. In the middle ages the mind of Europe was bound by the two-fold and closely linked chain of ecclesiastical subjection and doctrinal orthodoxy. The effect of the Reformation was to break one strand of this two-fold cord, leaving the other as strong as ever. It freed its adherents from subjection to the Church's government, but it enforced by the whole weight of its authority a dogmatic creed no less minute and strict than the old one.

Christendom is now longing for a new reformation, not in the direction of the narrow bigotry of Protestant Sectarianism, not for the exchange of one task-master for another, but for the broad and glorious liberty of Catholic Evangelic truth, which teaches that Christianity is not so much a matter of polemics, as a living power in the hearts and lives of men.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following Dissertations are not original in their conception, the plan of the writer having been, in the expression of his own thought to appropriate the clearest and most scholarly form of words in which this thought has been embodied by the best writers in the present or past ages, and then mould after careful collation, selection and revision, the materials thus obtained into a methodical and harmonious exposition of his theological convictions on the primary doctrines of the Christian Religion, and thus supply in a compact form, suggestions for a more Scriptural system of theology based upon a broader, more Catholic and more Evangelic exegesis of the Sacred Writings than has hitherto prevailed. After years of careful study and reflection, he finds himself animated by a deeper and more profound reverence and veneration for the Holy Scriptures, and a growing and uncompromising antagonism with what is called Protestant orthodoxy, while his convictions of the enduring nature of the Church of Christ, and of its primitive Episcopal organization as one principal channel through which the spiritual blessings of the Gos-

pel of Christ have been and are being dispensed to the world, have been confirmed and strengthened.

Knowing as I do the skill and indefatigable industry which the compiler and formulator of this treatise has expended in consummating his plan, and having critically perused his work in letter press manuscript, I have urged its publication in the present limited form, feeling assured that it will be made instrumental in helping Christian brethren in the adoption of clearer, more rational and more practical views on the chief doctrines of the Christian Religion, and that likewise it will assist a large number of honest skeptics who have been driven from the Churches by the irrational theories which are still sustained by so-called Protestant Orthodoxy.

The following are only a few testimonies describing our present religious condition, and showing the need of some such reformation as that outlined in the disquisitions which follow this introduction. I have reserved the names of my clerical brethren whose statements I quote, having satisfied myself as to the substantial accuracy and truthfulness of their brave and honest words, and in deference to the opinion of the compiler and author of this volume, who himself desires to remain unknown. On the second Sunday of the present month, a popular preacher, and the pastor of a leading Presbyterian Church, stated in the course of his sermon, "that out of 450,000 Protestants who were resident in the city of New York, only 125,000 ever went to a place of worship. Of these there were 83,000 professing Christians, 70,000 of whom kept their hands in their pockets, and did nothing to help their sinful neighbors, consequently the whole work of the Protestant Churches of the

city rested upon about 13,000 active members." He further stated that the "real trouble" consisted in the fact that Christians "built up a church organization to make a show in the world, and to go once or twice a week to enjoy good singing and good speaking." This sad and humiliating confession was made after industrious enquiry and sober reflection. With statistical accuracy it proclaims the failure of the Puritan forms of Protestant Christianity amid a population numbering about a million of inhabitants. A failure remarkable in its character for several reasons. A failure for which there is no excuse. The Protestant organizations of this city are simply colossal. The Protestant clergy, who are the spiritual rulers of these organizations, are not inferior in learning, ability, piety and indefatigable industry (in proportion to their number), to the clergy of any Protestant metropolis in the world. And with two exceptions, unique in themselves, and resident ministers of the city of Brooklyn, I know of none who are better paid, and whose means of usefulness are greater. The church edifices are for the most part fair specimens of architectural beauty, and not a few present an ecclesiastical exterior of surpassing elegance and grandeur; while the interior fittings display affluence and luxury to such an extent that the poor have hardly a place within them where they can feel at ease. The means placed at the disposal of these religious corporations, so far as material wealth is concerned, if properly administered, are more than ample to meet all the spiritual needs of the people; but the fact is, the Churches are, from extravagant management embarrassed by debt, while the great majority of them are only partially filled with occupants, and not a few

are almost, if not altogether deserted. Where then shall we find the cause for this condition of things as thus truthfully described? And *cæteris paribus*, a similar condition of partial, if not complete failure, will be found everywhere. Has the truth of God, or the love and light of our blessed Lord grown dim that His Gospel should fail, and that its power to evangelize the world should prove abortive? Not so! God's truth in the world was never brighter nor more resonant of His glory, of His power and of His love, than it is to-day, for the story of the Cross is interpreted in a clearer, purer and with a more rational intelligence than ever before. The failure of Protestant orthodoxy is no more a failure of the Gospel of Christ in the year 1880, than the failure of Romish orthodoxy was a failure of that same blessed Gospel in the days of Henry the VIII., or Edward the VI. Our Divine Saviour's love and life will march triumphantly over the *debris* of all apostate churches, whether Protestant or Romish; for God is no more a respecter of Churches than He is of persons, merely because they sit in Moses' seat. The Lamb of God was not slain to save ecclesiastical organizations. He grants no spiritual monopolies in order that His agents may plunder the people! What then becomes of the Church of Christ? This question can only be answered when you get a reply to another, and that other is: What is the Church of Christ? What is it now? What will it finally become? Now it is composed of all who are born into the life and love of our Divine Redeemer, and it will be completed when all He has ever loved have been born into His life and love!! Multitudes who love the Lord to-day, and like Nicodemus, who went to him by night, are also persecuted as he was,

by their own little sect, for being faithful to Christ. Not a few are cast out, and more than a few refuse to come in, because they do not see the life of the Cross in the professing Church,—they see more of the spirit of self and the world, of human dogmatism and what I would call creed-faith, than the spirit and life of the gentle and meek Saviour. The religious sects to-day are for the most part spiritually dead, and however materially prosperous they may be, this epitaph might be truthfully written on their church doors:—Starved to death by Protestant Orthodoxy; or this:—After a lingering illness this Church was killed by pew-rents.

How much longer will the churches continue to resist the plain injunctions of our Divine Lord? After casting out and scourging all who profaned God's House by traffic, He thus addressed the orthodox priests and pastors of his church:—"My house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations, [marginal reading] but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy Him: for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine." Mark xi. 17, 18. It is evident from this, as well as from many other passages of the Gospels that Jesus was in bitter antagonism with the spurious Orthodoxy of His day, and that His denunciations of its falsehood and corruption brought upon Him the hatred and the malice of the various Sectaries of the Jewish Church. After His human form was withdrawn from the earth, and His excarnation completed, He again descends upon his infant church in "cloven tongues, like as of fire," "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they

spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul : neither said any of them that ought of the things that he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common." This Divine Communism was a prophecy and a foregleaming of what Christianity should be, and one day yet in the future will become. But what a falling off is here ! Alas ! how soon selfishness and greed and love of getting, brought in their train untold miseries. Then came ambition with its lordship, envy with its malice, hatred with its murder—divisions, contentions, oppressions, and that hard and bitterest of all conflicts, the tyranny of the rich over the poor—the conflict of capital with labor, money *versus* toil ; but Jesus always on the side of labor, toil, poverty !! Read how His Servant James deals with pew-rents ! and let the churches learn that a front seat cannot be bought in God's House with money—"For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, and goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment ; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place ; and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts ? * * Ye have despised the poor." James ii. 3, 6. In proportion to the truth of doctrines, and the sincerity with which they are held, will flow a correspondingly pure life ; but if false or held in unrighteousness, that is unjustly, not sincerely, the outflowing life will be a counterfeit.

On the same Sunday to which reference has been made namely, the second of the present month in the city of Brooklyn

called the City of Churches, the pastor of its largest as well as its leading Methodist church, stated that if Jesus of Nazareth, as the poor and despised carpenter, were to come and preach in that city as He did in Judea, the smallest church would afford ample accommodation for all who would listen to his ministry. This eloquent pastor then stated that there were in the city of Brooklyn 300,000 people who did not attend any place of worship. From this testimony it is evident that Brooklyn is not behind New York in its indifference to the claims of modern Christianity as represented by Protestant orthodoxy.

In short it is a painful but a palpable fact that the great masses of the people repudiate pseudo-orthodox Christianity as represented by Protestant sectarianism. It is equally true that a very large majority of those who regularly attend and support public worship do not believe their puritan creeds, and are restive and impatient if their ministers even in a very mild form presume to preach or teach dogmatic theology, while the narrow few who desire this teaching and who are fast dying off, suspect their pastors of being disloyal to their iron-bound confessions of faith. It is safe to affirm that it would be difficult to find any congregation of note that would now tolerate the preaching of Jonathan Edwards, or Cotton Mather, or Michael Wigglesworth, the celebrated author of "The Day of Doom." The Puritan preachers have passed away and their theology has died with their sincere and enthusiastic devotion, and now lies mouldering in these creeds which hang round the necks of their successors in the ministry, holding them in a bondage from which they are continually but vainly attempting to escape. This bondage has been produced by a

moral revolution in the religious thought of the masses of the people, and an unhallowed compromise which still retains these unintelligible and contradictory formulas of doctrinal beliefs.

"THEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION" has been at work showing that God's truth grows and can never be confined within the limits of the religious thought of any one age. Our Puritan ancestors manufactured confessions of faith which suited their day and generation, but which are utterly unfitted for a more advanced condition of religious progress. Their nominal retention in the constitutions of our Protestant organizations has weakened our sense of obligation to candor and honesty, and exercised a demoralizing influence upon the religious conscience generally. Sectarianism is the root; corporate selfishness is the tree—dogmatic formulas and ecclesiastical corruption are the bitter fruit. One of the foremost men of the age, when asked his reason for not joining any of the Protestant orthodox sects, replied: "I have never united myself to any church, because I have found a difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their articles of belief and confessions of faith." Experience has demonstrated that the most transcendental and extravagant belief in machine-made confessions of faith, connected with long standing church membership, can be allied with sensuality of disposition and absolute criminality of character, while on the other hand purity and high principle often animate the minds of those who from their very integrity of character are unable to attach themselves by membership to any Christian communion.

Christianity is not a creed, for had it been so Christ would have given us one, but Christianity is a life, hence He said "believe in me," "I am the Life!" Character constitutes life. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." We need to-day to accomplish two great achievements by which the people, with God's help, will work out their own salvation—politically, a moral revolution, and religiously a spiritual reformation. These will emancipate us from the deluge of selfishness and corruption which floods the state and the churches. It is with the latter that this book has to do, and I am sanguine of its future for it unfolds a system of theology more scriptural, because more rational than that which has come down to us in a modified form from the dark ages. That theology which was true to the Puritans and which in the past served its purpose because the great Puritan mind was true to it, has become, because of higher education and enlarged knowledge, false to us of to-day. I know it is the fashion with Puritanical Orthodoxy to undervalue and even ridicule this enlightened progress which is one of the marked characteristics of the age; and oftentimes both the pulpit and the religious press will describe this advancing culture as the spirit of infidelity and the presumption of profane skepticism, dismissing the subject by pounding it with a few inapt and palpably irrelevant texts from the Bible, such as "The World by Wisdom Knew not God, etc.," "The Foolishness of Preaching," and so forth. But human thought continues to press forward, leading on to fresh discoveries and higher altitudes of material and moral light, while the preacher and the clerical editor continue the process of pounding to empty pews and an

exceedingly limited and circumscribed number of readers. Meantime the current facts of continuous history demonstrate the truth of this inevitable progress, proving the sleepless principle of evolution as Herbert Spencer has well shown to be subjective as well as objective—that is, inward as well as outward, mental as well as material.

Probably in its results the greatest event of this century will be the publication this year of a revised edition of the New Testament. Ten years ago this stupendous, and in its consequences, incalculably valuable enterprise of re-translating King James's Version of the Holy Scriptures was inaugurated under the direction and auspices of the Episcopal Convocation of Canterbury. The world will, before the year closes, receive the first instalment of this much needed undertaking. From the first the religious press looked with suspicion upon what some designated a daring profanation, while the secular press, always truer to the great cause of human progress, hailed the movement with marked favor. A very pungent article on the subject appeared in the columns of the *New York Sun* of the 18th of this month from which I quote the following passage, as showing the increased advantages possessed by the modern translators over those of 1611 :

“ The seven leading Bible societies of the world have already circulated over 125,000,000 Bibles, and here will be put forth a new Bible which will cast doubt on the accuracy of all that vast supply of the Scriptures which has been scattered as the unalterable Word of God.

Such arguments as these will undoubtedly be used. Yet the new revision is rapidly proceeding to completion, and if it is faithful to the originals, and honestly made with all the new light modern philology and historical investigation have thrown on the sacred texts, its variations from the rendering of our existing version must be many and important. It must omit

as utterly spurious passages which are held in loving veneration, and vindicate others about whose authenticity there is a strong and reasonable doubt. For not only has our knowledge of the original tongues in which the Scriptures were written greatly increased since the beginning of the seventeenth century, but we have also purer texts, and a flood of light has been poured during that time on the ancient manuscripts."

I am under a deep conviction that this new version of the Holy Scriptures will be a potent factor in the process of sweeping away false theories and worn-out theologies. I am also satisfied that the changes to be made will help forward the theological doctrines which are outlined and advocated in this little volume, as they are based upon an intimate knowledge of the original languages, and in short that this new translation of the Bible is in itself an evidence of the truth of these dissertations, and of the fact of "Theological Evolution."

For it is the Bible and the Bible alone that is destined to break down and disintegrate those narrow theological conceptions which present so mean and haggard a view of the Creator and Father of all. I give a single illustration of this:

"The confession of faith" of "the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America" teaches, and the ministers of this church profess to believe that—

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined to everlasting life, *and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.* These angels and men thus predestined and fore-ordained, *are particularly and unchangeably designed*; and *their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.*"

These articles, so repulsive and cruel, are said to be based on certain texts in the Bible. No wonder, there—

fore, when this sacred book is so slandered, and God, who is love, is so caricatured, that skepticism should prevail, and more than half a million of people in the cities of New York and Brooklyn should decline going to any place of worship;—such theology in the present day degrades man and dishonors God. If redemption and salvation be thus confined even in Christendom to the favored few, is it possible that enlightened men outside the Christian pale could love or trust so arbitrary and sanguinary a God? Could any human tyrant inflict greater injustice or cruelty than is here ascribed to that loving and all gracious Father “who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth?” 1 Tim. ii. 4. But the fact is that the Christian Scriptures even at this late day, with all that Bible societies have been doing, are not in the possession of more than one-fifth of the human race. Perhaps it is a promising feature of the present, and for the future, that four-fifths of our race know nothing about these sacred writings. And before they can be made available for any really universal acceptance at the hands of mankind they must be rescued from even the suspicion that they teach any such theories of God and His character as are contained in the doctrinal teaching of Puritan theology.

When Christendom shall grow out of its narrow sectarian spirit and embrace a theology which shall unite truth and life together—when it shall possess not only a pure and true Bible but be itself in its character a living epistle of its Bible’s truths, then, and not till then, will the nations of the earth accept at the hands of Christendom that

holy volume which, when rationally interpreted and sincerely obeyed, brings with it not only individual but national salvation. Race prejudices and prenatal disabilities will disperse and vanish before this glorious Book when it comes backed up with that purity of character and self-sacrificing disposition which animated the mind and life of the crucified Nazarene. Our vain and conceited attempts and our lavish expenditure of treasure to convert the heathen, will be a fruitless and utter waste, while with fire, sword, and soldiery equipped with and drilled in the use of an artillery before unequalled in its power to slaughter, we go forth first to plunder, then to civilize. Whole races are not to be converted by our advent amongst them with the Bible in one hand, and that the sinister one, while the other comes laden with bayonets, bombshells and taxes. For seven years I was the Secretary of the oldest Bible Society in the world, in the city of London, and during that time I circulated more Bibles than all the ministers of this city ever handled. During the Crimean War and the Indian rebellion, I have, in *one day*, given away one by one with my own hands, to British soldiers, as many as six hundred Bibles. The details of these distributions are published by "the Naval and Military Bible Society," in my book named "The Word and the Sword." I am familiar with the labors of Bible Societies all over the world, and I am amazed that these institutions have not learned the lessons which they have taught me—namely, the fruitless character of their foreign work! The truth is, before Christendom can convert the world, it must itself be converted! The Bible seals its condemnation and foreshadows its future failures in these words; "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Its theology has almost slaughtered brotherly love and emasculated our holy religion of the common and universal Fatherhood of God. It has tried to falsify and kill the Scriptures, and one great evidence of the Bible's Divine Inspiration consists in the fact that it has failed to do this. This theology of the past—which is always changing because it is defective—is man's interpretation of God's truth, which being perfect never changes. Hence theology, which is both an evolution and a growth, must continually experience modifications and new adjustments in the direction of progress, while the truth of our Divine Saviour will ever remain the same, proclaiming in clearer and more penetrating tones, the power of His love as the Creator, father and sanctifier of all.

I have a final word to say in writing this introduction. It has been my uniform habit during a ministry now covering nearly thirty years, never to stand on the fence concerning the truth of the Gospel; hence, I cannot leave my readers in doubt as to the sort of endorsement which I give to the doctrinal teaching of this volume. I believe that it contains the highest, the clearest, and the most harmonious unfoldment of Scriptural and Christian truth which I have ever read.

Those of my readers who, in New York City, attended my ministry will readily recognize the conformity of my views with the writer and compiler of these dissertations, especially on such subjects as moral evil, the Trinity, the Atonement, the Inspiration of Holy Scripture and the Incarnation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and it is a pleasing reminiscence that he was one of my occasional

hearers when I treated on these subjects. It is probably owing to this fact that he has kindly accorded to me both the privilege and duty of writing this introduction and giving a general literary superintendence to the publication of this volume designated "THEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION." Under this title these Dissertations present a harmonious unfoldment of a theology which coincides with a rational exegesis of the Holy Scriptures, while sustaining and vindicating their divinely constructed and supernatural character, showing how the first sweet bud of the graceful and majestic Rose of Sharon shed its penetrating fragrance on the history of our race, and how, out of the beautiful allegory of Eden's Garden, the perfume of Revelation's Inspiration spread.

Back, back, far back! before writing was known, or even symbol that could distinguish sound was discovered, on wings of traditional fame and glory, [came God Almighty's primeval promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Then was born that sweet Child of Inspiration destined to slay the giant of ignorance and the vampire of sin. How that sweet sentence of universal love and promise grew and became not merely a book, but a congeries of books instructing the world and enlightening all succeeding ages is a question, the solution of which can only be found in the life and character of the Holy Nazarene. Thus the Almighty Father, through his written Revelation—while yet unwritten, wrapped in the swaddling clothes of unborn memories, like a spiritual foetus in the womb of history, and lying in the cradle of tradition—teaches not only the ages and generations which are not,

but also those which are yet unborn, how He works ; how every hour brings with it its divine evolution or unfoldment, until, in the fullness of time, the divine attributes are presented in a humanity perfected, containing “ all the fullness of the God-head bodily,” and finally glorified, so that “ death is swallowed up in victory,” and in the *man* Christ Jesus all that there is of God and man are irrevocably and inseparably united.

God help us to study this imperishable volume—the Divinely Inspired Word of the living and true God—around which are centred the springs of the world’s greatness, and separated from which it would become lost in the measureless and dreary deserts of human depravity—that we ourselves may be able to live the life of Christ under the divine illumination of His love, and become emancipated from that sectarian bigotry which is as the shifting sand or the baseless fabric of a dream.

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FEBRUARY 28th, 1880.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

IN a series of dissertations on the cardinal doctrines of Christianity it seems eminently proper to begin by speaking of the Holy Scriptures. God's Holy Word is the foundation upon which the Church builds all its teachings, and the foundation must be laid before we can build anything upon it. That Holy Word is the foundation of all truth. It tells of God Himself and of his dealings with men. It sets before us Jesus Christ the Ever Blessed Son of God, and points out the way of salvation : It teaches us what we are to believe and what we are to do : It is the very voice of God speaking to us from heaven. If, then, we be going to speak of the things taught us in this precious book, it is surely right to begin by speaking of the book itself.

The Bible is, in the truest sense, a revelation of the mind of God, for "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," but it is a revelation of the Divine mind, not simply as expressed in the words of human language, but as clothed in the forms of human thought. Revelation has therefore two sides, a Divine and a human. Divine in its essence, human in its form, the revealed like the incarnate Word, is Divinity clothed with

humanity. On its Divine side it is absolute truth, on its human side it is relative truth. The absolute truth of Scripture is like its Divine author, eternal, unchangeable, universal ; its relative truth like its human writers, is temporal, variable, local. The absolute truth of scripture is not, therefore, that which appears in its cosmogony, its science, its history, or even its ecclesiastical laws and institutions. These are forms of human thought which belong to the periods in which the scripture was written, and are but the human vesture in which Divine truth clothed itself, when it descended from God to the abodes of men. The Old and the New Testaments are striking examples of this. In descending into the Hebrew mind, Revelation clothed itself with the forms of Hebrew thought. Much of it, for this reason, consists of the history of that peculiar people, and not a little of its teaching is accommodated to their particular state of mental development and imperfect spiritual discernment. The Hebrew Scriptures contain no direct revelation of the immortality of the soul, and speak of none but temporal rewards and punishments ; other laws besides that of divorce were given them "for the hardness of their hearts," and their whole system of sacrificial worship was the adaptation of an existing ritual to their carnal state.

The New Testament is addressed to a higher condition of mind. Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. God as a spirit is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The law of ordinances is abolished, and the moral law is raised to a higher standard. If the state of mankind, at the time it was revealed, had been less degraded, the letter of the Scripture would doubtless have been a more perfect image of its spirit. It would have contained no indications of an angry God ; no command to slaughter nations, and seize on their heritage ; no sanction of con-

cubinage or plurality of wives ; no worship of God by offering Him the blood of slain beasts. We must, however, carefully guard against supposing these to be blemishes, or even imperfections, in the Bible. On the contrary, they are justly to be regarded as evidences of the perfection of Scripture, as a wise means to a beneficent end. A form of revelation more perfect in itself, expressed more in accordance with absolute truth, would have been less suited, or rather would have been entirely unsuited, to the imperfect nature of man. The Holy Word of God bears the image of the earthly in order that by coming nearer to man in his earthly state, it may raise him to the image of the Divine and to the state of the heavenly.

In studying this great Book, we must remember that its disclosures of Divine truth are made in accordance with the laws and limitations of our intellectual being, and its modes of representation vary according to the different degrees of culture in those to whom they are addressed. Revelation cannot, at all events does not, communicate truth to the human mind faster than the mind is able to receive it. The Bible is a large book, because it comprises instruction for all people and all conditions of people, in all ages. But large as it is, it would have to be many times larger had it been designed to teach us all that we learn in this life. This you know the Bible does not for a moment affect to do. If we think that the Bible ought to teach us history, chemistry or astronomy, let us remember that heaven will not be closed to us, should we remain ever so ignorant of such secular knowledge to our dying day, and that nobody will be questioned on any such subject at his last account. But does the Bible contain no history? Beyond doubt it does, but history not in the ordinary but a restricted sense. Its history was written to subserve and illus-

trate its lessons. It would be at variance with acknowledged principles, and, therefore, unreasonable to find a history of the world in a Scripture history.

“All Scripture,” we are told, “is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” It thus appears for such practical ends alone its facts have been selected. How much are we told about Adam and Eve? Barely that they were the first of our race, *and that they sinned*. How much of Noah? Barely that he and his family were saved when the rest *of the descendants of Adam and Eve* were destroyed by a flood, “whereby the world that then was”—as St. Peter expresses it—“being overflowed with water, perished,” but whereby few persons, that is, eight souls were saved. “*The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us.*” Showing after all that it is to the typical character of the deluge, rather than to the event itself, that the Bible points.

The Bible commences with the “first Adam,” but it only mentions him to point away from him to the “second Adam.” To the second Adam it had reached all through, and with the second Adam it ends. No matter where or how our race began, it will be well if we end in Him.

Whether our earth were formed six thousand years back or six millions, and whether it survive us or not, is alike indifferent, so that the purpose for which man was placed on it, be subserved—so that it prepares man for heaven. Difficulties that encounter us in every walk of life, must not be supposed to be absent from the Bible. Is it not the height of assurance and folly, to suppose that we can by mere knowledge of the ancient languages, and of the rules of grammar ever so profound, attain to what was in the mind of its Divine Author, whose purposes were veiled, and

shrouded in mystery from those who penned it, and still only known so far as they have been interpreted by the event, or by some further commentary supplied by Himself? How can we hope to fathom what God meant, if we confine ourselves to the rules employed by us for ascertaining what man means? Our view of the passage may be contradicted by facts, but then it is our view, not the passage, which is proven false. If there be one thing more than another which the Bible does, it points forward. It discloses no more to us of the past than is absolutely necessary to enable us to realize the present, and press forward to the future. The crucial question for us is, to what extent God has promised to unfold this meaning, or has actually done so. "The natural man," says the Apostle, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." I cannot recall any passage, where more is promised either to the individual or to the Church, than the last quoted. But according to it, we are left to infer that there may be much in the Bible, of which the full meaning is as yet withheld, for which we must be content to wait in faith.

Most, if not all, of the popular difficulties with which Scripture has been credited in our own times, are purely fictitious—in other words, have been created by man; by our forefathers or by ourselves. It is not Scripture, but their or our interpretation of Scripture that is in fault. The claims of Scripture have been most seriously compromised in our days, by the glosses that have been put upon the Bible.

The difficulties of Biblical interpretation come from ourselves, from our bad logic, from our inherent egotism, from exaggerated

notions of our own importance in various ways, many more than we perhaps ever realized. The Bible, for instance, tells us how the earth which we inhabit, was formed for our first parents—we directly conclude, without any authority, that it could not have existed till then, or served any previous purpose. Scripture is reserved on both points. We will not hear of its silence. We insist it shall speak, we put our own meaning on it. Scripture tells us positively, that Adam and Eve were the first of our race, we directly conclude that there never was any race of beings like ourselves, of other origin. This again, is our gloss upon Scripture. Science is at liberty to prove if it can, that some nations now existing, have descended from pre-Adamic tribes, and to carry those tribes back to the pliocene epoch, or to suppose that some pre-Adamic tribes have become extinct. It need not disturb our confidence in the credibility of the Mosaic history, which, it is enough for us to know, is the commencement of a family tree, one of whose branches was Israel, one of whose children was Jesus. Almost all our interpretations of the first ten chapters of Genesis are derived from times when everybody piously believed our earth to be the centre of all things, and everything in the universe to have been created for the sake of our earth. Galileo was condemned for teaching that the earth moved, and this theory was pronounced as being contrary to Scripture. Galileo modestly pleaded that Scripture was never intended to teach us astronomy. In order to substantiate their charges of heresy, the would-be defenders of the faith first assumed the teaching of Scripture to be that the sun moved, and then contended that it was a physical impossibility that the earth should move too. Impotent assumption! Absurd inference! Few infidels ever discredited scripture more than these Roman Inquisitors. The grand-

est of all the recorded scenes in the Old Testament—"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon," became the sceptic's lever from that time forth, not at all for what it really means, but because of their gloss.

There are various other glosses upon Scripture, that from having become traditional, are clung to still, in spite of their obvious incompatibility with the spirit of modern thought and progress, which it is my purpose to point out to you in these dissertations. Whenever these glosses are abandoned, it is scripture, not infidelity, that will be the gainer. We cannot surely require that Scripture shall continue to be read by the feeble lights of a past age, nor can we be justly surprised that modern discoveries should have made such havoc with the glosses inherited from it.

Just as there is a progressive system in any other department of knowledge, in nature and in mind, by which we can ascend from simplest facts to their complex connections, and from these connections to generalizations, which we call laws, so there is a progressive system in the Bible. Religious knowledge must be progressive. We ought to know more than our fathers, the moderns more than the ancients. And this does not necessitate the making of a new revelation. A book written on geology a quarter of a century ago, is absolutely worthless now, except as a milestone far behind, to show the progress of later investigations. So of chemistry, botany, astronomy. Yet these do not necessitate the idea of fresh creations. The atoms, the affinities, the plants, the stones, the rocks, are the same that they have been for thousands of years; but our acquirements in the knowledge of all these are perpetually enlarging. The records of God's mind in the Bible need no appendix or addition, yet the workers in this field will expand the area of religious knowledge, as long as the Bible and

the human mind co-exist in the universe, just as astronomy will extend its domain, so long as the mind of man co-exists with God's multitudinous stars.

The apparent conflict between religion and science is due greatly to a fundamentally wrong idea of Holy Scripture. Modern sectists seem to forget that "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." They forgot that the Lord spake all things in parables—"and without a parable spake He not." And if He always spoke in parables when He tabernacled in the flesh, can we suppose Him to have spoken in any other way, when He spoke through other mediums—through Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles? There is much of truth in the letter, but the richest gems, its exhaustless stores of wealth, lie deep within. "Our Lord Jesus Christ," says S. Austin; "intended that these miracles which He wrought on the bodies of men, should also be understood spiritually." "The law of God," says S. Ignatius, "is spiritual, and they have not the true law who do not take it spiritually." "Whatsoever," says St. Jerome, "is promised to the Israelites carnally, we show will at one time or another, be fulfilled in us spiritually. Pamphilus says: "Though these things" in the four Evangelists, "have a spiritual meaning, yet the truth of the history being first established, the spiritual sense is to be taken over and above."

Such is the theory in regard to the Holy Scriptures taught by all the most learned and illustrious of the Christian Fathers—a line of interpretation which they adopted, as a learned English author says, "by a kind of sacred instinct." I have already warned you against glossing upon Scripture; let me warn you quite as strongly against distorting facts. By glossing Scripture, I mean not merely putting an interpretation upon Scripture which misrepresents it,

but maintaining that this and no other can be its meaning. And by distorting facts, I mean not only stating them in a confused and imperfect manner—for this is hard enough to avoid doing sometimes with the best intentions—but mis-stating them, to make them appear favorable to some exaggerated view or whim of our own. It is thus sect arises. One school of opinion, one tide of religious movement gains the mastery; it sweeps all other sides of the truth aside; it forms a new centre, and around it these gather the prejudices, the interests, the love and hate, and the passionate worship of men. It may be a weighty truth or a living movement in the beginning, but it becomes false when it is pushed out of its place. And it unfortunately results that one error begets another equally extreme in a counter-direction. Let us turn to the Roman Communion as a case in point, from which we can learn a lesson. Wearing the antique splendors of the church, it is a colossal sect which for ages has been elaborating a dogmatic system composed of scholastic sophistries, and its sectarian spirit reached its result in the fatal logic which forced it to the dogma of infallibility, and left it the foe of thought and freedom for ever. And yet it is only an imperial example of the vice always in the Christian body—for what is its despotic sacerdotalism, from the usurpations of which one European government after another has recoiled, but a fanatical exaggeration of that conservative respect for ecclesiastical order and authority taught by Holy Scripture.

We must thus again fairly judge the character of Protestantism. The reaction of spiritual freedom against despotism loosened the common bond; one said, I am of Luther; and another, I am of Calvin; and soon the great body crystallized about rival creeds. Faith in Christ became faith in a formula of justification, and the supremacy of God's Word, the tyranny of theological systems. It

was against a Romish error of a grace shut up in priestly sacraments that Calvin declared, as Paul did, the free gift of God ; but his scholastic mind changed the truth of the Christian calling into an abstract theory, and so a great sect grew up of an elect few who, instead of the simple faith of Christ, must be indoctrinated into most subtle logic.

And thus the sectarian process went on. Another party thought infant baptism inconsistent with a church of the regenerate, and a new close communion followed. The Unitarian refused the dogmatic view of the Trinity, and his religion became a cold negation instead of a faith in the living Son of God. Each definition begat a division, each division a new communion. Every truth in the whole range of knowledge, man's or God's, has its own intrinsic value, which comes to it from its connection with the entire universal system of truth, and one great trouble with Christian students is, that they devote themselves to some one truth, which is certainly truth, but which they study segregated from its connections ; some doctrine, some sacrament, some principle true in itself, but only part of the truth, is taken as the paramount centre of the whole Christian system. We have one Bible, but each turns it into a book of proof-texts for the special theology of the sect ; and thus the manifold grace of God, the generous life which by His plan should work in the Church, as He creates the oak or the palm, the rose or the wild flower, is dwarfed by the sectary into a garden walled around.

The purport of revelation is to be gathered from the general scope of the Scriptures, and not by the study of isolated texts. We commonly fortify our creeds and confessions of faith with an array of what are called "proof texts." This may be expedient, but it is a mode of proceeding that may be perverted to the great-

est error. By separating single passages of Scripture from their connection, and by the exercise of some ingenuity in selecting, arranging and mutilating these texts, the most marvellous variety of theological systems has been constructed out of the materials of the Bible. And as a specimen of the way this much abused book is sometimes treated in the pulpit, you will hear a single passage quoted from the words of Eliphaz the Temanite, to confirm some favorite doctrine ; and on the next Sunday, another from the lips of Job, to prove something else, entirely ignoring the fact that Eliphaz and Job are in controversy, and that each is trying to rebut the assertions of the other. Now, if there be any one thing which distinguishes the Bible from other works, it is the perfect freedom with which it utters whatever truth seems to be called for, without the slightest regard to its verbal consistency with any other truths recorded in its pages. In one place it is said God repented that He had made man ; in another, that He cannot repent ; the sins of the father are declared to be visited upon the children, and again it is said that they are not. Jesus says, " I and my Father are one," and almost in the same breath He adds, " My Father is greater than I." St. Paul affirms that we are justified by faith without works, and cites the case of Abraham in illustration of the doctrine ; St. James just as emphatically says, that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only, and also refers to Abraham in proof of his position. And yet, properly interpreted and regarded in their legitimate connection, there is no real inconsistency in any of these statements.

It is thus that the Scriptures present to us the full complement of truth ; for, in theology as in all other sciences, completeness is attained through apparent contrariety. Even in mathematics, the

most rigid of all sciences, there are theorems which seem to conflict; and the whole kingdom of nature is full of discordant harmonies. There is just as much a science of super-nature as there is a science of nature, but it is as absurd to complain that the Bible was not written scientifically in an orderly body of dogmatic theology, as to complain that the book of nature was not written scientifically. No! let God be praised that He has flung the beauties of nature all about, giving man's mind the capability of educating the scientific system from the apparently promiscuous prodigality of creation. Just so God has made the Bible; history and prophecy, and song and drama and letter. There is a string of truth on which they are strung, a principle moving through them all. It is our business to discover that principle, and not to content ourselves with being amused at the phenomena of individual truths, nor to destroy our intellectual symmetry and equipoise by incessant devotion to a truth separated from all its connections.

The moral of all I have said is plain. We should have faith in Scripture; but have no such faith in any meanings put upon it, which God has not inspired. It is by the glosses which have been put upon Scripture that the claims of Scripture have been mostly shaken in our own days. We might as well try to convert the budding into the full blown rose with our fingers, as to force Scripture open with our conjectures when its meaning is sealed. Of private duties it speaks far too plainly for most of us. Because there are difficulties in the Bible we must not let ourselves be seduced into closing our hearts to all those ennobling lessons there, which "he that runneth may read."

THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

To speak of God, or even to think of Him, is, in one sense, to raise a difficulty, for in so doing we are always seeking to represent the infinite by the finite: that is, by terms whose significance is relative only, and many people are so possessed with the darkness and obscurity of the subject that they avoid all inquiries of this nature as utterly despairing of ever attaining to any tolerable notion of it, and yet faith pre-supposes a competent degree of knowledge, else a man may be saved by a faith in—he knows not what.

St. Augustine tritely says: “That God exists more truly than He can be thought of, and that He can be thought of more truly than He can be spoken of.” The nations of antiquity tried to reduce God to some external likeness of men. Do not despise them. They are buried away and linger only in the names of the stars, or in the names by which we distinguish the days of the week, and they have given way to a system which modern theology has invented—essence, substance, begotten, unbegotten, proceeding, person, mode, subsistence, perichorisis, circumincession, etc.—in all of which respects God is spoken of as infinite and eternal. But when we come to analyze the ideas these terms suggest in the hope of at-

taining to an intelligent conception of them, we are on every side involved in inextricable confusion and contradiction, no matter in what point of view we regard them.

Nothing so perplexes the mind of an ordinary layman as the astounding and exclusive familiarity which the clergy and writers on dogmatic theology profess with reference to the nature and character of God and His dealings with mankind. They undertake to clear your poor head of all doubts and difficulties. They insist upon your adopting their arguments, which, to you, seem no arguments at all, and accepting their explanations, which explain nothing. What you want is a foundation. They can dispense with that. They can build in the air. So at one time we are told confidently about an arrangement between the Father and the Son, whereby a certain price was to be paid for the sin of mankind, and mankind rescued from the devil, or from the Heavenly Father, or from sin, or from an offended law. A forensic transaction of some kind has taken place between the Father and the Son. The crucifixion of Christ has satisfied the wrath of God against sin, or has satisfied the majesty of offended law. It is sometimes difficult to understand what has been satisfied, nor is it easy for an average mind to perceive how, if it be sin against the law to pardon the guilty, it should be no sin against the law to inflict arbitrary suffering on the innocent. It has been thought by some that to add such an infliction to the remission of a penalty is to double the transgression against the majesty of offended law, not to cancel it. But such objections do not much trouble professional theologians, who reply that God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts.

Again we are told of the tender and infinite love of God. Indeed how loving are his ways ! He appears according to some to

have predestined a certain number of people to misery, and others to happiness, therefore we can repose in His love, and may be perfectly comfortable, if we are not perfectly horrified, because we may assume that we ourselves and our friends are predestined to happiness, and why should we trouble ourselves about others? God is merciful, but then He is just, and so forth. It would not be difficult to go through the usual round of popular statements about God. But when we examine from whence our theologians got all their information about God and Christ and mankind and the devil, we find that they have taken the Old and the New Testament, or bits of either, turned chapters upside down, fitted texts on to each other without regard to contexts, joined sentiments together which have nothing to do with each other, made no allowance for idiom, style, phraseology, allegory, poetry, or diversity of origin in a mass of records stretching over several thousand years, with an unintentional irreverence and an ignorance and falsification to which, perhaps, no other historical work has ever been subjected. And the result? The result is our popular theology, a patchwork God, an artificial Christ, and a scheme of redemption irreconcilable with any intelligible theory of either God or Christ, so that John Wesley was tempted to declare that "God as usually represented to us was more of a devil than a God." There is reason to fear that it is the simplest and most fundamental of Christian truths that would sound newest in men's ears to-day. We preach too often in place of Christ's Gospel, a human theology which is neither reasonable nor Christian. Some of it is the product of the monkish scholastic mind of a world that has passed away. Some of it was shaped amid the violent excitements and reactionary strifes of the Reformation. It is not too much to say if men now doubt of God and their future life, it is greatly because they

can no longer believe many dogmas of an hereditary theology which is the only exponent of christianity they know. I would not be understood as wishing to attack theology or decry dogma. But I would make the distinction that theology is not the faith. That "the faith once delivered" is unchanging and unchangeable. Theology on the contrary is only the creature of man's apprehension of Divine truth. Hence theology must change, must move with the movement of the human mind, and its history is only the record of its growth. It is our part to carry on its progress, and for this we must recognize its deficiencies. If we clear it from its errors we strengthen it and do it service.

Now for many years, a false theology has been holding up to man, ideas of God and man wholly inadequate to the enlarged and refined conceptions of the age. These ideas were adequate to the past, for they were the product of the past, but they have fallen below the intellectual and moral level of the present. They are handed down from days when sound scholarship was unknown, when man's only aim was to find support for theories, and his only study how to warp and blind the Bible language to make it fit the hybrid philosophies of the schools. They come from misreading Scripture, they spring from that blind literalism against which I have warned you,—a literalism that kills because it misses the spirit of truth. They are the human outgrowth which has buried and choked the simple truths of the Gospel. There is something of Algebra in every science. If you lose a first principle, you will never comprehend the results of the study, and a mist will settle down in your mind over the whole department of knowledge. And this is particularly true of the subject before us, for as one's idea of God enters into all the doctrines we believe, error or ignorance in this fundamental of all

faith, darkens our perception of every other truth. Besides, unworthy ideas concerning God re-act injuriously on a man's own character, and Lord Bacon truly said that "it is better to have no opinion of God, than to have a false one."

In the previous dissertation, I have spoken of God's Holy Word as being the foundation on which the Church builds all her teachings. It is all important then to learn what the Bible teaches us of God Himself, for a true knowledge of God is the highest of all knowledge. We must know God in order to become like Him; and when we become like Him, we have salvation. Come with me then to the first element of knowledge, and help me to lay in its appropriate place this fundamental truth, and you will find an easier access into all the affiliated and dependent truths which over-lie it, and gain a happier insight into all those resultant matters which arrange themselves on the line of our investigations. The existence of God is an apprehension of the mind direct and intuitive. It comes up conjointly with the idea of our existence, when logically considered, and indissolubly, as the necessary condition of it. The universe is, and reason describes it as conditioned and dependent, and as effected by a cause beyond itself—in a word describes it as a creation. A second cause there is, and there must be a first. The created gives the uncreated, for how could the finite be without the Infinite? The phenomenal and relative without the absolute and eternal. As well might you have matter without space—events without time—a river without banks, or a valley without hills. There cannot be a dependent being without an independent cause, and we must finally come to a Being who not only furnishes existence to other beings, but is the ground of His own being. This office work of reason is authenticated by the Bible. The Bible opens with the declaration "In the begin-

ning God created the heavens and the earth." It assumes His being as already known to reason, and refers only to what he did. It institutes no formulas of proof respecting His being. In studying the Bible, as I have repeatedly said, we must remember that its disclosures of divine truth, are made in accordance with the laws and limitations of our intellectual being. It reveals God to us through the types of natural analogy, because we could comprehend no other style of revelation ; and its modes of representation vary according to the degree of culture attained by those to whom they are addressed. God is revealed to the Patriarch, in conformity to patriarchal habits of thought ; to the Jew, on the level of the Jewish plan of culture—to the disciples of Jesus in all His fullness.

Under the primitive and patriarchal systems, God is usually spoken of as though He possessed a human form. He walks upon the earth, converses with his creatures, labors, and rests from His labor. He is described as eating and drinking, going and coming, and is even said to wrestle bodily with man. Whatever in this seems to be inconsistent with the more spiritual views of Deity, afterwards taught by the Scriptures, is sufficiently explained, when we consider that it was impossible for the human race in the beginning to apprehend the idea of the Divine Personality under any other forms of representation. Coming down to the Mosaic economy, there is exhibited to us a more elevated view of God. The doctrine of his unity and personality is kept inviolate, but the human form vanishes. "No man can see Him, and live," represents the popular feeling ; His presence is manifested in symbols of fire and cloud, His voice is heard in the thunder, and the power of His hand is felt in the whirlwind and the storm. The moral elements of his nature be-

come more prominent ; He is revealed as a just and holy God “ who will by no means clear the guilty.” And yet He is merciful, long suffering and gracious. In the popular conception of Deity, we still trace, of necessity, the influence of Hebrew modes of thought ; He is the God of the Jew, and not of the Gentile ; human passions are attributed to Him, and some things are referred to His inspiration, which could more reasonably be ascribed to an earthly origin. This is no argument against the divinity of the Jewish economy, for a revelation must be adapted to the existing degree of human development ; it would be no revelation if it were much in advance of the popular apprehension.

As we follow on the course of Jewish history, and listen to the teachings of the later prophets, a still more spiritual conception of God gradually dawns upon us ; He ceases to be recognized through the medium of material symbols, the physical demonstrations of His power and presence, are superseded by the spiritual, and He moves upon the heart and mind by the direct and unseen influence of His spirit. His attributes and character shine forth with more resplendent brightness ; He is revealed as an unchangeable God, whose purposes are eternal. “ God is not a man, that He should lie ; nor the Son of Man that He should repent ; ” a loftier view of worship is developed, and mere ceremonial holiness gives place to spiritual sanctity. At last, Jesus came, and the fullness of the Godhead was seen. Types and shadows vanished before the reality. The “ Man of War ” retired to make way for the Prince of Peace. The mystery of Godliness, which had been hid from ages and from generations, was made manifest. The true ideal of God in all its completeness, was clearly exhibited to man. “ God is a Spirit ! ” “ God is love ! ” these were the glorious words of the new dispensation. And morning broke upon a darkened world.

Careful readers of the Bible cannot fail to have observed in it seemingly conflicting statements, in regard to the moral character of God. Thus we read: "I am the Lord, *I change not*;" but we read also, "The Lord *turned* from the fierceness of His anger." "He is not a man, that He should *repent*," yet, "It *repented* the Lord that He had made man." God is *love*, and yet "The wicked and him that loveth violence, His soul *hateth*." "Fury is not in Me," and yet, "The Lord revengeth, and is *furiosus*." In the book of nature, as well as of revelation, we are compelled to distinguish between genuine and apparent truth. We know that in the great volume of nature there are many appearances of truth, which are quite different from the truth itself. Indeed, among the works of God, the absolute truth seldom lies on the surface. It is only necessary to refer here, by way of illustration, to the apparent diurnal motion of the heavenly bodies, which we know is so different from the real truth, though the world had to wait many centuries for a Copernicus to penetrate beyond the appearance, and disclose the reality. And what more reasonable than to suppose, that in this respect, the Word of God should bear some analogy to His works. In truth, all must admit that the sensuous appearances of truth in the letter of the Scripture, are often quite different from the real truth, which usually lies deeper than the surface, and is, therefore, concealed from the eye of the casual observer. And among these appearances there is that which forms the basis of the popular idea, concerning the triune nature of God. That there is a real and not merely nominal triunal distinction in the Divine nature, is evident from many passages of Scripture, but the point I wish to make is, that no doctrine of the Trinity is Scriptural, which is not consistent with the absolute oneness of God; for if there be one thing more plainly taught and enforced by Scripture than any-

thing else, it is the acknowledgment of the truth that "there is *one* God, and *He only* is to be worshipped." "I am Jehovah, thy God, from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but Me, for there is no Saviour besides Me." "I, even I am He, and *there is no God with Me.*" "In that day there shall be one Jehovah and *His name one.*" "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by Myself.*" The Bible abounds in such declarations, and language could not possibly be framed stronger to declare it.

Greatly is it to be deplored, then, that notwithstanding such emphatic language, theological terms and definitions have come into use, requiring great necessity for self-examination, that we be not unconsciously led astray from a proper conception of the fundamental truth, "The Lord our God is *one* Lord." The Latin Fathers, believing that a distinct principle in the Divine nature was denoted by each of the terms, "the Father," "the Son," and "the Holy Ghost," in order to describe it, made use of the ambiguous word "*persona*," for the want of some better word for the purpose; the word "*persona*" being used as an equivalent to the Greek term "*Hypostases.*" Afterwards, when doctrines were introduced that required distinct personality or existences of Deity to sustain them, doctrines unknown to primitive Christianity, the term "*persona*" began to be understood in a sense very different from its original signification. What was the exact theological meaning of the word "*persona*" at the time when it was first employed or subsequently introduced into the so-called Athanasian Creed, to express the nature of the distinction in the Godhead, may be questionable, but everybody has an idea, until it is dissipated by metaphysics, what is to be understood by the English derivative word

person. To say that God exists in three persons practically is to teach that there are three self-conscious beings, and the conception is produced instantly in the mind, of three Gods. You may protest that you are not using language in its ordinary acceptation ; but what does the protest avail, if you go right on and assign to the three persons such offices and functions as inevitably beget the action of three self-conscious actors in the believer's mind ? Is it the words on the lips, or is it the inmost thought of the heart that God regards ? If, therefore, in order to prove that he is no tritheist, one should quote the declaration of the Athanasian Creed that there are not three Gods, but one God ; this would be no more a proof that he is not a tritheist than if he should quote the Ten Commandments in order to prove that he never had broken them. I speak of the doctrine of the Trinity as commonly interpreted. What the doctrine is I am well aware it would be exceedingly difficult to state. It seems to be very commonly agreed by those affecting to be "evangelical" that there are three persons—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—in the Divine nature. They are declared to be equal ; all to be infinite ; all to be the same in substance ; all to be one. But as soon as the question is raised what are we to understand by the word "*person*," the appearance of agreement, and often of self-understanding, vanishes. It is a pretty sure indication of corruption in theology when it requires us to wrest language from its legitimate use, and employ it in the Church, as Talleyrand did in the State, to conceal and obscure thought rather than reveal it ; darkening counsel by words without knowledge.

The articles of faith imposed in the primitive Church as terms of communion were few and simple, but, unfortunately, as men grew less pious and more contentious, the schoolmen and theologians

grew more minute in determining unnecessary controversies, and made more and more things obligatory to be understood than the Bible itself. To quote the words of Archbishop Whateley: "Though in itself the doctrine so sedulously inculcated throughout the Scriptures that there is but one God seems to present no revolting difficulty, yet on rising from the disquisitions of many scholastic divines on the inherent distinctions of the three Divine Persons, a candid reader cannot but feel that they have made the unity of God the great and difficult mystery, and have in fact so nearly explained it away, and so bewildered the minds of their disciples as to drive them to withdraw their thoughts habitually from everything connected with the subject as the only mode left for the unlearned to keep clear of error."

No man can assume three persons, meaning three consciences, wills and understandings, and still have any intelligent meaning in his mind when he asserts that they are yet one. If we think of a personal God, we must either think (no matter what we say) of one person or of more persons than one; and as we think so we believe. And this latter thought or belief, I submit, is polytheism, however we may seek by an ingenious use of words or phrases to conceal the solemn fact from others. A person can very well believe in a fact, or a being whose nature he cannot comprehend, but no one can believe a proposition the terms of which are unknown to him, for all that he does in that case is to suspend judgment on a subject of which he knows nothing. Nor can it be required that such a proposition should be received as a mystery, for when theologians make use of terms without meaning they only confuse the understanding and call the confusion faith.

The Bible holds steadily and with unqualified emphasis to the

teaching that there is one God in contradistinction to all the fictitious systems of human device ; and reason has a corresponding testimony. It asserts that there can be but one Supreme Being ; that the supposition of more is a logical absurdity, and involves an inherent impossibility. How could there be more than one who is infinite? The supposition is a solecism. The absolute, the unconditional involve the idea of the universal and exclusive. Such a coincidence, such a harmony and likeness would be demanded in the case, as effectually to exclude all plurality. Now do not understand because I object to the term *person* in the commonly received formula that I would teach there is no sense in which the doctrine of the Trinity is true, for that the Bible teaches the existence of a Divine Trinity is unquestionable. It must also be conceded that in the literal sense of the Scriptures this Trinity *appears* to be a Trinity of *persons*, just as it appears from the same sense, as if God actually indulged in anger, hatred, revenge and fury, and that He repents like one who has sinned, or made a mistake. But I have already called your attention to the fact that the *apparent* truth in the letter of the Bible is not always to be accepted as the real truth.

The doctrine of the Trinity rightly conceived is not contradictory of the primary truth of the unity of God. It is the one God of reason, nature and revelation subsisting in the oneness of His being, as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and reason sees no objection to it. She cannot penetrate enough into the essence of being, created or Divine, to ascertain what complexity there may be in the uniqueness or oneness that is in it. Possibly there may be no existing substance absolutely and every way simple. It has been frequently shown that diversity in unity is one of the great principles of all life, certainly all higher life. In almost

every possible form of human thought we acknowledge a diversity in unity, often a Trinity in unity ; it reaches through the whole constitution of the world.

If I look at the flame of a lighted candle, I know there is light, there is heat, and I see there is form, and yet the form is not the heat, and the heat is not the light, and the light is neither form nor heat, and yet these three constitute the flame. Diversity in unity also extends throughout animated nature. It is more visible as we ascend the scale of being through the animal creation, until we come to man, a highly complex being, having many diversities in unity within himself, but principally a compound of one great trinity in unity—body, intellect and spirit, heart, head, hand, feeling, cognition and conation, or as St. Paul states it, body, soul and spirit. Thus in us there is—nay, we are as we live and move and have our being—a trinity in unity. Now raise the principle from the platform of things seen and temporal, to the sphere of things unseen and eternal ; and is it so vast an assumption to say the great laws of life which hold as far as ever we can trace them in this world, extend also beyond it, and that the things on earth are the patterns of the things in heaven ? Is it so vast an assumption to say that the Divine Life is in harmony with all other life ?

But here let me say, that *the legitimate practical tendency* of any doctrine is one of the surest tests of its truth or falsity. All doctrine is to be regarded not as an *end*, but simply as a *means* to an end, and that end is life. Doctrine—I speak here of religious doctrine—may be considered as the science of spiritual life ; and like all other sciences, of no value unless reduced to practice. Assuming the principle here laid down to be correct, I come now to apply it to the subject before us. For

if all doctrine has relation to life, and the obvious tendency of any one, when reduced to practice, is to be taken as evidence of its truth or falsity, this ought to be eminently true of a doctrine so important and as central as that concerning the object of our worship. Setting aside the dry, dogmatic formulas concerning the Trinity of the schoolmen as not wholly competent to represent the living truths of Christianity, and therefore not standing the proposed test, let us view the doctrine from another side. Let us examine it from a point of view, which though not exhaustive and exclusive, is yet a view from which we may gain an apprehension of it, of much *practical* importance, and one that can be fairly applied to life.

You know that Christians have disagreed considerably upon the great question of man's salvation. They have differed in opinion, both as to the nature of this work, and the means by which it was accomplished. Some have maintained that *faith* is the all-essential thing, or that we are saved by *faith alone*. And it cannot be denied that there are passages in the Bible which appear to favor this doctrine, nay, which appear to teach it very plainly. Others have maintained that belief or faith is a matter of comparatively little consequence—that men are not saved by faith, but by love or charity ; and they too, are ready to meet you with their proof texts. Others again have believed and taught the doctrine of salvation by *works*. Some ministers, you know, make *works* the burden of their preaching, and these also quote numerous texts of Scripture in support of their view. In the dissertation on the Holy Scriptures, I spoke of such seeming contradictory texts. It appears as if the Bible sometimes taught that men are saved by faith alone, sometimes by charity alone, and sometimes by works alone. I say the Bible *appears* to teach these

three different ways or means of salvation, just as it appears to teach the existence of three metaphysical persons in the God-head. Let us see whether when Christians take a practical view of the Trinity, it be possible for them to differ in regard to the means of salvation. Every thought we know is the offspring of some affection. It is begotten and born of some love in the will. The love, therefore, is truly *father* of the thought. Indeed all that is of heaven in any human soul is actually begotten of divine love, and actually protected, fed and nourished by it. Hence God, when spoken of with special reference to His love, is not without reason, called in Holy Writ, the Heavenly Father. By "the Son," which, in the Gospels, primarily denotes the Immanuel or the God Incarnate, in a secondary sense, is denoted God, in respect to His wisdom. Christ Jesus is therefore said to be made of God unto us *wisdom*. He reveals the will and knowledge of God to us, and makes us *wise* unto salvation. Our Saviour, speaking of the bad treatment that John the Baptist and Himself had met with from the Jews, says: "But wisdom is justified of her children," meaning, I who am the *wisdom* of God, am justified by you, who truly believe in me.

Divine wisdom is the truth or Word which the Scriptures assure us was in the beginning with God, and is God, "And the *Word* was made flesh and dwelt among us." It was by *wisdom* that God established the heavens and founded the earth. It was this wisdom that the Lord possessed from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. It was by wisdom that the Father, we are told, resolved to do all His works, first to create, and then to uphold, govern and judge, and afterwards to redeem and save the world. All which works in Scripture are assigned to the Son of God. The Son of God, Wisdom or Word is also declared to be

the "Light of men," "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And as thought is simply the form of affection which brings it forth to view, so God who is *Love* is revealed to us through the Divine Wisdom or Word. Thus it is ever the Son which shows us the Father. Nor can we draw spiritually near to God except through the truths of the "Word." Therefore our Lord speaking as the Divine Logos says: "No one cometh unto the Father but by Me." As in nature, heat imparts its vivifying power to light, so the love of God is the vital element in divine wisdom or truth. It is this which imparts to truth all its quickening and regenerating power, and hence it is written "The Son can do nothing of Himself," and again, "I can of mine own self do nothing," "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

If agreeable to the popular theology, the Son were a second *person* in the Trinity, yet equal in every respect to the Father, or first person, why should He be able to do nothing of Himself? Why should He attribute all His works to the Father? Again: the Son is spoken of in the New Testament as being gifted with the exclusive power of *judging*. "The Father," it is said, "judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Now, why is it that the Father has nothing to do in so important a work as that of *judging* His intelligent creatures? Why is all judgment committed unto the Son? I know not what reply theologians would make to these questions, but, according to the view of the doctrine I am advocating, the answer is plain. Our Lord says of Himself, "I am the Truth," and is it not one of the appropriate offices of truth to *judge*? Is not this one great purpose for which the truth is given, and one of the things it does, when it comes to human minds? Whenever we receive any truth, that

truth immediately passes a judgment upon us—upon our character, conduct and former beliefs. It approves of whatever in our minds is in accordance with it, and condemns whatever is in opposition to it. All the judgments, therefore, which men render, are true and righteous in proportion as they accord with the truth. When, therefore, wisdom or truth comes to our minds, it reveals to us our real characters. This is the reason the *Son*, which signifies God, in respect to wisdom or truth, says; “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not, might see,” etc., showing that *enlightening* men, or enabling those hitherto blind to *see*, which we know is exclusively the office of truth, is really to execute judgment. And this also shows us why “all judgment” is said to have been committed unto the *Son*.” And as if to leave no room for doubt on this point, our Lord says, on another occasion: “He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him; the *Word* that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” It is God’s Word, therefore, which is to judge all men, and His “*Word is truth*.” This also explains why it is that the second coming of the Lord is uniformly spoken of as the coming of *the Son of Man* to *judge* the world; for the promised second-coming of the Son of Man is the coming, as I believe, of the truth in its spiritual sense, to the understanding and hearts of men. And is not this judgment now going on?—that the Son of Man is already coming in the clouds of heaven?—that old things are passing away, and all things are being made new?

Again: the Father is said to be *greater* than the Son. “My Father is greater than I,” is a text which, according to the tri-personal theory, gives the Unitarian a decided advantage in the argument touching the divinity of Christ. But in the practical view of

the Trinity I advocate, this text presents no difficulty. The Father denotes that prime essential in the Divine character, love, and as love is superior to wisdom or truth in point of dignity and importance, just as charity is superior to faith (for which we have the authority of St. Paul), therefore the Father is said to be greater than the Son. Then we are taught that there is a most intimate union between the Father and the Son—so intimate that they are said to be one.” “I and my Father are one.” How one? It is plain if, according to the popular theology, there are two *persons*, they cannot be one person. They can only be one in spirit or essence. And here again the tri-personal theory gives the Unitarian a decided advantage. For if the oneness predicated of the Father and the Son is simply a unity of spirit, all good men are divine in the same sense, although in a lesser degree. But, according to the simple, practical view of the Trinity I would have you take, the Father and Son are really and unequivocally one, as soul and body are one, as heat and light are one in the sun, or affection and thought in man.

And thus I might go on multiplying texts of scripture almost indefinitely in which *Father* and *Son* are mentioned, and showing how easy of interpretation they all are, and what a clear, consistent, and rational sense they yield for all practical purposes; while, according to the metaphysical view of the schoolmen, they are—some of them at least—so hard to be understood, and embarrassed with so many and great difficulties.

The translators of our English Bible have done more, perhaps, than all others, to impress the popular mind of Christendom with the belief that the Holy Spirit, so often spoken of in the New Testament, is a distinct Person. As it was their confirmed belief that there are three persons in the Godhead, they undoubtedly en-

deavored to make their translation conform to this idea ; and accordingly they uniformly translated *Pneuma Hagion*, “ Holy Ghost.” But every Greek scholar knows perfectly well that *Pneuma* is mis-translated, when translated by a word which conveys the idea of a distinct person. The word has no such meaning. Its primary signification is a *breathing* or *influence*—some principle, power or influence sent forth *from* a person. Could it, with any propriety, be said of a *person* that he was *poured out* upon others? That others were *filled* with him? That he was *communicated* or that they received him internally by the imposition of hands, or by being breathed upon? Or that others could be made partakers of him? But this and all other language in the New Testament, used in reference to the Holy Spirit, becomes easy of interpretation if we understand the Holy Spirit not a person but an influence, or that Divine and Holy Proceeding of love and wisdom from God, corresponding to the natural proceeding of heat and light from the sun, and their combined operation throughout the domains of nature.

Is it objected that the Holy Spirit must be a Divine Person distinct from the Father and the Son because it descended as a dove upon Jesus? It also descended as “ cloven tongues as of fire ” on the Apostles, and was heard as “ a rushing mighty wind.” God was once in “ the still small voice ” heard by Elijah ; will it be argued that “ the still small voice ” was a distinct person? All such Divine appearances symbolize and represent Divine qualities. Innocence, purity and love were represented by the “ dove ” which descended on Jesus. The might of inspired utterance was represented by the “ cloven tongues as of fire,” which “ sat ” upon the apostles. The power of truth from God dispersing error, was represented by the “ rushing mighty wind.” The gentle pleadings

of Divine truth were symbolized in "the still small voice." The baptism of "fire" was the holy unction of love with which the Lord will baptize His people. We are taught to believe that every regenerate man is created anew in the image of God, and it follows from what I have said that the true conception of the Holy Trinity tends to incite us to the honest and faithful exercise of all our faculties. It shows us that the head and heart and hand are all concerned in the work of salvation, and should all act together as one; that since man is gifted with an understanding, a will and an ability to do, it was meant that he should be a *believer*, a *lover* and a *doer*; or that he should *understand*, *will* and *obey* the laws of his spirit's life. Therefore the sayings of each of the apostles are true—that "love is the fulfilling of the law;" yet "without faith it is impossible to please God; but "faith without works is dead."

A correct view of the doctrine of the Trinity gives a peculiar significance to the formula commanded by our Lord to be used in baptism. Baptism is a symbolic rite signifying regeneration or to be spiritually recreated—made altogether new in our feelings, thoughts and actions. In other words the spiritual import of baptism, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' is to have our human will purified or brought in conformity with Divine love; our understanding enlightened by Divine truth and our life directed towards good works and the performance of noble, righteous and manly deeds. If this exposition of the Trinity exposes me to the charge of Sabellianism, that is, the heresy of maintaining but *one* Person under three attributes or manifestations, I explain that I purposely do not intrude upon the inmost nature of Deity either by assertion or denial, but my object is simply to bring God nigh as our Heavenly Father, in the methods of His love, and the behests of the future.

The term Trinity is an algebraic sign for an unknown mysterious relation. But there are those who cannot endure the mystery. They cannot put up with an obscure undefined idea, and they forget that even if we say nothing of the Trinity, it is not possible for us to find out the Almighty to perfection, or even our own soul, and as St. Augustine admits: "Three persons are spoken of not in order to express the truth, but in order not to keep silence respecting it."

But the church of the future is not likely to quibble over phrases with a view of evading the heresy of Sabellianism. By-and-by we shall not be in such a mortal fright of heresy, because we shall gain a clearer insight into the limits of the human mind; and the imperfection of all human language. We shall perceive that the most correct theology can be no more than an approximation to the truth, and consequently the most definite language about God only an imperfect and partial attempt to express that which cannot be intellectually apprehended in its height and depth, and length and breadth; and must therefore forever remain unuttered and unutterable, a consciousness, a life, a spirit. And this will come to us as time rolls on with a growing sense of peace and trust. It is just the attempt to define "person and substance" in relation to the Infinite God which has brought such confusion upon the Church; such terms supply a very poor and meagre expression for the great thought which is in our souls; indeed they are hardly worth fighting about; we can conjure with them to any extent to evade this heresy and that, but it is poor work after all, merely a concession to dogmatic imbecility. We may strain after something about God when there is nothing in man to receive it; it will not even come within the laws of thought, but we will attain a knowledge of the Supreme in just the degree

that we will suffer Him to mould us into His own glorious image, for I maintain that the true nature of the Divine Trinity reveals itself in the constitution of the finite human being and finds here its only complete and rational explanation. Any doctrine of the nature of God which fails to teach this will sooner or later be seen to have no foundation, and will be discarded by the wise and good as a human invention. We were made to be the recipients in a finite degree of each and every element that enters into the Divine character. We can know nothing of God's love save as its nature or quality is revealed to us in the love that we feel and which flows into our hearts from Him who is love itself. We can know nothing of God's wisdom except so far as that humble measure of our human wisdom, which we receive from Him, shadows forth or in some measure images the Divine. And so of God's mercy, justice, long-suffering, tenderness, benevolence, foresight, righteousness and all the other Divine attributes. The argument for any doctrine based merely upon its prevalence is always suspicious when we consider the tendencies of a corrupt human nature to bring down Divine truth to its own level. The temptation is strong and subtle to yield to the corrupt currents of opinion and be swept along with them, but when we lay our finger upon a doctrine which has been the animus or mind of the church through all its most fearful apostasies, the argument from its prevalence is dissipated. History as well as reason turns full against it.

The first historical development of Christianity was in strict accordance of God in Unity of being, brought near to man in the Divine Saviour. The Pentecostal Scene fulfilled the promise of the Comforter. It was not produced by preaching Tri-personality and a Vicarious atonement. It was produced by preaching Christ and the resurrection with repentance and remission of sins ; and as

for the Holy Spirit which came as a baptism or fire, it was said of the Glorified Saviour, "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." So the first conversions were made, and the first churches were built up. The dogmatic era of the church had not yet begun. They simply looked up to the Saviour, the God become man, and "the Holy Spirit fell on them" (a distinct person indeed?) and its power rolled in upon them in surges of energy, peace and love. No student of history, we think, will affirm that there is the least hint of tri-personality in the Godhead, in the writings extant of the Apostolic Fathers. Later down, we have explicit statement from Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian, of the essentials of the Christian faith, and what had "always been believed" in the Church. In these, the New Testament form both of language and doctrine, is preserved; but there is no lisp of tri-personality or a substitutive atonement. These old creeds are refreshing, for they have the breath of the morning hour. But the dogmatic activity of the Church was at hand. Precisely in the degree that it declined in Godliness, and the primal graces disappeared, was the Divine personality cloven and separated in its authorized formulas. The Arian controversy raged for more than half a century, in which the worst passions were unloosed upon both sides. What a surface do these times present, from which to reflect the divine doctrines—this Surging Sea of human hatred and strife! The Athanasians ejected from the primitive creed the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and two persons began to appear. The Arians rejected the doctrine of the Saviour's essential Divinity and God receded into the dim and inaccessible heavens. Which party was to prevail was long doubtful. The Church split into two nearly equal factions, and it seemed a drawn battle, except as one or the other allied itself with the civil power. *How* they prevailed, and

by what process the ancient Anti-Trinitarianism "died out," involve a very interesting passage of history, and one which is calculated to make a man exceedingly modest in urging an argument from the "*quod Semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*" Uniformity of faith followed. Tri-personality became, if not the "*quod Semper,*" yet undoubtedly the "*quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*"

Then followed the long dreary arctic night of the Church. The litanies went up to three persons, and along with them the half-stifled groans and half-muffled cries of oppressed and weary human nature. From the cold regions or burning sands of exile, from souls slain under the altar, from the midst of blazing fagots, from dungeons underground, from "Alpine Mountains cold," went up the prayer, "O, Lord, how long!" while from the cathedrals, churches and monasteries, went up the worship of Tritheism. The age was dark; and a very pertinent question arises, *What made the age dark?* Any age becomes dark just in the degree that the knowledge of God is lost. Any age is dark in proportion as its worship becomes untrue. The idea of God is vital, central; all our other ideas are fitted to it, and borrow their light from it, as the plants borrow their light and their beams from the sun. All our duties, notions of man, of duty, of neighborly love, of nature, and revelation, of this life and the next; of regeneration, redemption and preparation for heaven, are determined and vitalized by our conception of God, for that is the inmost of all our thoughts and actions. Thus the Christian idea of God sinking down into the ages gathered their darkness about it deeper and deeper, and was dissipated and divided, and ended in confirmed Tritheism if not Polytheism; and then there was pagan night over all the Church, and man was a wolf to man.

We have not time to trace the influence of Tritheism on the

religion of modern Protestantism but we think it has been disastrous enough. Under Protestantism it allied itself organically with the doctrine of putative, instead of genuine righteousness, and therefore preserved all its power to hurt and to kill. To this we owe all the deadly Antinomianism of Protestantism which, these three hundred years, has separated faith from charity, religion from life, and devotion from honesty. Perhaps if we summon all the facts to bear witness, we might hurt the oil and the wine of neighborly kindness. They are patent enough in the history of the sects. In days of darkest corruption, and amid the most awful wickedness of an apostate church, there have been multitudes who have lived and died in the sanctity of a genuine faith. And what has been the doctrine which has laid hold upon them and saved them? I believe it will be found to have been simple faith in Jesus Christ, as a Divine Saviour, rising above the tangles of Tritheism. This has been the saving element which no corruptions could completely overlay. It is a personal vital union of the disciple with his Saviour that causes the Divine life to pass into him and transform him into the Divine image and produce from within, outwardly, not a putative, but a genuine righteousness. This and not the Tripersonality has been the renewing power of Christianity, and wrought all the graces and the righteousness, and the zeal, and the piety distinctively Christian, for this is where God meets the soul and has his tabernacle with man. This is the door through which he comes and floods the heart with His strength and love.

SIN.

I HAVE endeavored to impress you with the fact that there is a great deal of modern theology, which has the reputation of being orthodox, but for which there is no sure warrant of Scripture. Skeptics have ever made it a reproach against theology, and even the faithful have found it a painful mystery, that there have sprung from its teachings so many various dogmas and creeds, all based on seeming truths, yet in many cases mutually irreconcilable. That there may be a variety of aspects in which the same truth can be regarded, may be justly granted. But that propositions should arise, all apparently truthful to a certain extent, and yet inconsistent; while from the diverse attempts to reconcile such contradictions, or from disputes as to which of these discordant truths is most essential and vital, and should, therefore, override the rest, doubts and confusion should ensue, is a most serious difficulty. It ought nevertheless rather to convince us that there is error in the premises whence these discrepancies are drawn, than shake our faith in either revelation or reason. For it is self-evident that truth must be uniform. The fundamental principles, and the fundamental facts of God's moral government must be consistent with themselves and each other. He cannot be the

only being in the universe whose character is falsified by His voluntary acts. Hence His word cannot manifest Him in a light which reason may not discover to be consistent, benevolent, and just. Whatever system of theology fails to effect such a reconciliation, the fact argues a misinterpretation of Scripture, and the subject requires reconsideration.

The subject of the origin of moral evil, which comes before us in turn, in our series of dissertations on primary doctrines, has always necessarily held a prominent place in the various systems of theology. No subject has so embarrassed the claims of religion as that of the existence of sin. Theology has been put to her defences here, and many have deemed them lame and inadequate to the encounter imposed. Irreligion has made her boast at this point, published her scandal, and hurled her defiance. Respecting God, as related to the prevention of sin, she has said, "If He could, and would not, where is His goodness?" And it, cannot be denied that replies have been faint, and timidly given from the friends of truth. Although we cannot say that this or that definition of the doctrine is the true one to the exclusion of all others, yet there is one theory which has obtained wide acceptance, which we need have little hesitation in pronouncing positively false, and I mention it by way of warning, as being part of a system of pseudo-theology, based on the barbaric principle that might makes right. A system to which I will again allude when I come to speak of the doctrine of the atonement. The God of such theology is in His own being, self-sufficient. He created the world for His own glory, and man to pay Him worship. He has the rights of a feudal lord over his serfs. We have no business to judge of the right or wrong of His actions—the Sovereign is above the law. And then man having the mis-

fortune to inherit a diseased moral nature is strangely enough held accountable for that misfortune. He is by nature born in sin, and a child of wrath. He is under a curse. With evil propensities, and little strength to resist them, he is thrown in a world of temptation, and left to take his very slight chance of escaping eternal damnation at the hands of a just God, who hateth iniquity.

It is no wonder that men of clear head revolt against such a caricature of Christ's Gospel, and prefer no religion to a bad one. Where in this is the great truth of the Divine Fatherhood? Where God's patient, tender, self-forgetting love, so beautifully taught us in the parables of our blessed Lord? Where St. Paul's grand idea that He must always, and through everything, remain true to His own nature? "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." It would seem that this theology has done for us what the great Apostle believed impossible when He exclaimed, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."

That God does not hold us morally responsible for the sins of our first parents, we ought not to feel obliged to argue. Such a displeasure would be a mere resentment alike unphilosophical and unjust. That God would harbor such vindictiveness toward a race of innocent beings, simply because they were that which He Himself had made them, thus punishing them for His own act, is utterly incredible and revolting. Apart from its intrinsic impossibility, God Himself expressly declares that He does not punish the children for the sins of their fathers, though undoubtedly, under the inflexible laws of His material universe, the

natural consequences of sin may extend beyond the perpetrator. Nor is the injustice implied in such a view the only argument against it. If Adam were made grand and perfect why did he fall? He did fall, therefore why was he not made perfect? And we are led to inquire further, why, if God foresaw that the whole human race were to be thus displeasing to Him, did He not refrain, either from their original creation, or from their continuance after the transgression of Adam. It can hardly be believed that He would preserve the existence of a race in which every new birth awakened new sentiments of disfavor and displeasure.

The view I would warn you against, represents to us, God creating man in a high and responsible condition, as a moral being, his native character and faculties—his rank in the universe, his relations to his Maker, and his prescribed destiny being far more exalted than they have at any time since been exhibited. It tells us that scarcely had he been formed in this perfect mould and inaugurated in this lofty place and mission—scarcely had his Maker pronounced him “very good,” ere by a single step he fell from his high estate, and sank into corruption, wretchedness and ruin. For this the system of the Universe offers no analogy. Nowhere among all the kingdoms of Nature, can an object be found, which is stamped with the mark of its own failure and disappointment. But this theory teaches that man must be excepted. Am I denying original sin? On the contrary, I would affirm and must affirm, that we are all suffering, not only from actual sin, which we have committed, but from a certain original tendency to sin, for which we are personally not responsible. And this is not only the assertion of the theologians or old prophets. The scientist will tell you those bad tendencies you call sinful are inherited tendencies, inherited from your father and grandfather, and even their ancestors,

and so up to the old Adam, whoever he was. Yes ! we carry in us the burden of past generations, we carry in us the taint of their original sin, in our members, and in our mental tendencies and emotions, and it is a most solemn and practical reflection that as tendencies are inherited from the past, so tendencies are transmitted to the future, so that those of us who have children, leave for good or evil, indelible marks on the universe. The Catholic Church, in her corporate capacity, has never dogmatised upon the subject to the extent of setting forth a definition which was exclusive. It would therefore, be grossly presumptuous for any individual teacher to attempt to do so. Considering, however, that a certain degree of latitude is fairly allowed, it may be useful to explain the doctrine of the origin of moral evil in harmony with the spirit of the age and the general teachings of the Bible.

In turning to contemplate the moral history of our race, we naturally revert to the circumstances of its origin, as recorded in the Book of Genesis. In an examination of that book for the purpose, it is irrelevant to discuss whether Moses was its author, or only its compiler, for whatever may be the date or origin of this history in its present form, it does not affect its nature or authority as an inspired revelation, disclosing, under some guise or other, the origin of the human race. But it is very important to bear in mind that the language used in the narrative is of the most archaic and primitive character ; so simple that its words, few and typical, are still invested with the purely physical ideas which originated them. The words are simple, the style artless. The person who wrote down the story of Eden, talks of the Almighty as of a man walking in the garden in the cool of the day, smelling burnt meat, and resting after work and so forth. It

is a mode of expression reflecting a state of human culture of a simple age. The hidden meaning, whatever it be, is certainly not in the diction, not in the style, but mainly in the objects themselves. One thing is evident ; there is much meaning condensed in a very small compass. The emblems are a Rosetta stone awaiting a Champollion. They are like the cuneiform tablets before the key was discovered. Indeed one of the greatest evidences of the truth of Divine Revelation is that even the sacred writers themselves appear not to have comprehended fully, the spiritual import of the truths they recorded ; thus showing that they were inspired by a power exterior to themselves. I mention this to guard you in your reading, from being too much restricted, and governed by the letter of the sacred record. It was given to the inspired writers of Holy Scripture to condense mighty truths in a single sentence ; such great truths that one phase of them appears to have filled their whole minds completely so that they could not grasp another. But there are other and still other truths underneath, in rich and endless strata.

There appears to be a recognition of this principle of progressive spiritual enlightenment, in our Lord's words, addressed to His Disciples : " I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." And it seems also to be implied by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews. " Strong meat " the Apostle writes, " belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Such development of spiritual knowledge is in accord with what we should expect, for there is no end of man's progress in knowledge of the works of God, and if the word of God bears any resemblance to His works, why should there not be a progressive evolution of deeper and still deeper truth from

His word? The suggestions of common sense indicate, that if the Bible be a revelation from God, it would be impossible to unfold all its mysterious fullness at once. If it were written for all men, and for men to the end of time; its treasures must be yielded up slowly; there must be "pastures new," and rich waving harvest fields, for all generations. Sculpture, architecture, and the decipherings of discovery in every form from Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh and Jerusalem, are giving them new solutions; while prophecy, philosophy and science, are keeping these divine verities ever new, by elucidating and unfolding their mysteries; and thus in the ages yet to come, as in the past, it will continue equally true that:—"Every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things new and old.*"

There never was a time when there was such an intense anxiety to know something certain about God, and about His relations with man. Formerly these questions were settled by creeds and formularies, but our age seems to have grown somewhat impatient with dogmatic assertions, which cannot be understood or appropriated; and when one finds religious truth stated in such a manner as to obscure its connection with life and ordinary experience, he is tempted to become either a shallow formularist or an infidel. Do not think that I am blind to what dogma has done for the world. Do you suppose that I deny the truth which, in another age, to other nations and other civilizations, they nobly strove to utter? I trust I am not so thankless nor so foolish. It is not dogma with which I quarrel, but with fixed dogma. It is not with theology, but with that petrified form of theology which never alters, and which ignores the fact that although truth may be fixed and absolute, our appreciation of truth must be relative and progressive.

We learn from the Word of God that there was a time when this present world of ours "was without form and void." There were no bright orbs shining in the heavens—God was all in all. All else existed only in the mind of God. But there it did exist in mind and intention, and this is taught by the words of St. James, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning."

All that God has done, and all that He will do, has been, and will be, merely the accomplishment of designs which existed in the mind of God before the world was. We shall see by and by the importance of marking this. At length the time arrived for God to begin to convert these intentions and designs into realities. I say God began to realize these designs which had previously existed only in the Divine mind, because the realization was, as I wish to impress you, a gradual process, and even yet, as we know, is not completed. I have spoken of the law of progress, because it is in grasping the fact that all things progress and develop, that we become sensible of the divinely active and intelligent principles of divine and human life. The universe is simply God unfolding Himself in exterior forms; His subjective powers becoming objective. And if He be, in the essential quality of His nature, an active, creative Being, He must of course have been always so. If He radiates light and heat to-day, He must have done the same as long as He has existed. The present forms of creation undoubtedly had a beginning in time, but we are not to infer that God never put forth His creative power previously, and in other ways, through the countless ages of eternity. Now try and carry your thoughts far back into the past, to a time when the whole of this universe which we see—these stars, these planets, this earth—formed but one immense fiery mist. Astronomers tell us, and I believe the speculation is accepted by our best scientific

men, that this universe was nothing but a fiery homogeneous mass, or matter reduced to a state of vapor in intense heat. As time goes on, this mass begins to cool, and as it cools, a motion, a rotary motion, is set up, and from that motion the vapor condensing into solidifying masses, the planets are thrown off in rings; and thus we have the planets, the sun being in the centre of what is known as our solar system. This theory is called "the nebula hypothesis," and it illustrates the law of progress. Let us now single out the earth. Go back to the world's beginning as described in the book of Genesis. I do not plead for the exact correspondence of the Bible as a statement of scientific truth with fact, for it was never intended that revelation should anticipate the discoveries of modern science, but for all that I do not think sufficient justice has been done to the account given in Genesis as unfolding practically, the kind of order in which this world came to be developed. Substantially, what do we read? We read of the earth being "*without form, and void*;" in fact, very much in the state in which science tells us that the world has certainly been at some remote time. Then the next thing we read is, that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Now, the latest researches of science tell us that *motion* is the beginning of all progress, the source of all development. Then we find *light* and *heat* mentioned in connection with fertility and vegetation, differentiation of life, and we know that *heat* and *light* are only modes of motion. I need not point out how the progress is traced up through the organization of species, reptiles, fishes, birds and beasts, culminating in man, and taking what are called so many days or ages, for we need not suppose ordinary days to be meant; just as when we speak of "the present day," we do not mean to-day, but the present age. Nothing that God does is great

at first. All this picturing of God's rolling a flood of worlds into space is merest poetry or pulpit rhetoric. All God's great were once little. He never spoke a whole paradise into existence at once, so far as we know. Look at the smallness of the beginnings, and the slowness of the movements, as geology and Genesis unite in teaching us. One by one God made things. It was a long operation, related by Moses through a whole chapter. Then when the earth had become capable of causing seed to germinate, we do not read that the Lord God made every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew, but it is said: "And the Lord God planted a garden," "and out of the ground made the Lord God to *grow* every tree. Omnipotence that can do instantaneously submits to the laws of progress. Thus the Almighty, having brought His material creation by successive and advancing steps of preparation toward the crowning work of man, was ready to usher him into being. Being on the threshold of His moral scheme, we may suppose the Deity planning in advance the method by which He will raise His moral system upon the foundation so slowly and elaborately reared for it. When we remember the uniform mode of action exhibited in all His previous works, there seems but one course that He will adopt. He never has begun with completeness, and He never will do so, but every step shall be an advance upon the preceding. It is not material to know whether Adam physically, or the race as typified by him, was created directly from the dust of the ground by the slow process of evolution up through the various lower grades of animal existences, as some modern philosophers and scientists contend. Scripture can be quoted on either side of the question. "In nature progress begins," Mr. Darwin asserts, "by physical improvement attained through the sharpest process of weeding out

weak specimens, and leaving only the more capable specimens of any type." Suppose we grant it. How, then, did nature, with this for its great principle, attain to the law of pity and sympathy for weakness—the law of self-sacrifice—the law of Christ?

Is it not obvious that the more clearly Mr. Darwin and others show that improvements in physiological organizations are attained through close competition, the more certainly they prove to us that human nature in its highest form—the Christian nature—has some other and very different root from physiological law, and that the charity, pity, and self-sacrifice for inferiors, which is of the essence of the cross, is no development of that law which governs physiological progress, but is of that nobler competition which reverses it? The Christian revelation which teaches that man in his natural state is eminently selfish and carnal, and needs spiritual regeneration and extraneous assistance, is infinite, strengthened by the discovery that there is nothing in the lower world below man, which could possibly be developed into that divine principle which is God's special gift to man, and which makes our highest glory consist—not in the succumbing of the weak to the strong—but in the self-sacrifice of the strong for the weak.

I mention this theory of "Evolution," the truth of which is far from being established principally to illustrate, that in scientific investigation, discoveries that at first may seem incitants for doubt, if properly regarded, may be found to supply new weapons of faith. Even if the extreme theory of evolution should be generally accepted, it is confessedly but a theory, and can never prove it impossible for nature (which is another name for God), to strike in at any assumed point in the grand succession, to institute a new line of development of a higher order, and with reference to which all preceding evolutions had been preparatory. However far back, or

to however low an origin we trace the frame-work of man, we can not go further down than Genesis and St. Paul lead us. "The Lord God made man out of the dust of the earth." "The first man is of the earth, earthy." In Sanscrit, man is called "the thinker;" in Greek, "the gazer upward;" in Latin, "the speaker," all terms celebrating some ennobling attribute. But when we turn to the language of Holy Scripture, we find him called "Adam," earth—"ish enosh," the feeble one, the weekly. You tell me that it is a scientific fact that I come from the dust—the Book of Genesis told me so before science discovered it; and in the very lowest types of living creatures, there are prophecies of the life by which I am animated. You tell me that my body by evolution, was the result of a fixed law, and the Psalmist exclaims in concurrence: "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy Book all my members were written, which in *continuance* were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." You tell me of physical law, but there is another and higher law, the law of my moral nature. It is not the descent, but the ascent of man, that reveals his true nature. In our outward frame, we may bear resemblance to the lowest of the animal creation, but in the spiritual, innermost being, we share with God Himself. The real destiny of man depends not on the advance of his material or intellectual grandeur, but on his moral nature, on what we are, on what we do, on what we love, on what we hate.

By whatever process, however, the race of man originated, whether by gradual development, or immediate creation, it appears that Adam—possibly a generic name—was at one time possessed of an innocence and simplicity of character, which, from his *not* having the moral sense or apprehension of right and wrong, was akin to that appertaining to childhood. Nobody can read the first chapter of

Genesis independently of the glosses of Milton's "Paradise Lost," and the delusive myths of popular teaching, without seeing that what is described there is not the ideal creature which we have put together out of our imagination and devout fancy; but an uncultivated being of low intelligence and feebleness of will, giving way to the first temptation that crossed his path. In fact, Adam as a man, was evidently very much the kind of being which Mr. Darwin and Herbert Spencer have described. Our first parents were, nevertheless, so far elevated above other creatures with endowments and germinal possibilities—so much more possessed of the attributes of God Himself, that they were said to have borne the Divine image and likeness. I do not think that the Bible is a repository of scientific truth, its value is of another description; at the same time it is only fair, when we hear the Bible held up to ridicule by men of science, to point out that the practical and substantial order of progress indicated in Genesis is, after all, not so very far wide of the mark. We read there an account of human nature, and a very detailed account given of a progression from the simple to the complex, roughly similar to what we now know must have taken place. At some time of their existence—as has also been the case of all their descendants who have reached years of discretion—our first parents acquired the moral sense or apprehension of right and wrong, represented as the partaking of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil;" and thus becoming morally responsible, sin became at once a possibility, and speedily a fact. The moral scheme, if it designed to leave man a free agent, could do no more than give him the ability and opportunity to shape and determine his own character, and the first step towards this was, of course, to make him a creature capable of having one. My limits do not suffice to elucidate this view by lengthened argu-

ment, but I would have you mark the distinction that the tree of whose fruit our first parents partook, is not called the tree of good and evil, but the "tree of *knowledge*" or apprehension, "of good and evil," which whatever it was, we are told is an attribute of Deity also.

I would have you also note that the so-called sentences or penalties passed upon Adam and Eve, were only an enumeration of some of the duties, restraints and conditions of life, incident to the more exalted but more hazardous state of existence into which they had entered; such conditions and restraints as always devolve on nations and tribes emerging from the indolence and licence of barbarism, and such incentives for the practice of industry and virtue, as a loving and prudent father might urge, when some of his family leave the ease, comfort and protection of the parental roof, to battle with the world. Sin becoming a possibility by the new condition of things, brought about through the exercise of man's free will, God foresaw that it would require severe restraints to check it, and in His fatherly goodness promptly imposed them. Indeed, the fact that God said, "Behold, they have become *like us*, to know good and evil, forbids the assumption that such knowledge is necessarily in itself a sin, but rather that it makes sin a possibility, and holiness as well. Sin is by the wrong use of faculties and susceptibilities, in themselves and in their normal exercise right. This was so in Eden, and must have been so with the angels that kept not their first estate. In no other way could transgression occur. It must have been through the disobedient and improper exercise of capabilities inherently right and good, and of God. This is largely characteristic of all sin, though when once committed, it tends to perpetuate itself, and it may become a giant evil, and be perpetuated through

eternity, but its first entrance is from the inexperience and immaturity of virtue, and it will occur, if at all, in the instep of a moral economy. The sinner, once in the wrong, is out of harmony with God and with himself, gets into the habit and the toils of sin, and in many ways hedges up before himself the path of recovery to holiness. Much is possible and even liable, that is under no necessity of being, and that ought never to be. It does not, however, excuse its actuality. The converse of all right is possible, and there is not a holy aspiration, or act of loving obedience and praise in the universe, without power to the contrary. *Necessitate* it, and you *spoil* it. Make it otherwise than the free act of a free mind, and freely rendered in the place of a possible alternative, and you quench the light and glory of a moral system, and annihilate the characteristic distinction between the intellect of man or angel, and inert matter or brute force. Finite, derived intelligence, of any order, will begin at zero in development, for knowledge is an experience and a growth, and not a creation. This implies no imperfection in God or His work, but is inherently of the nature of that which is finite and has a beginning. The liability of wrong in finite intelligence is actual and obvious, and has its truthful exponent in the fall of man; but is conceivable as a concrete reality only in beings whose existence begins—whose life is a growth in knowledge and experience—whose history is an accretion and a culture—a trial and a probation. *They* would eventually get beyond it, and be wise and too good to be under any actual liability of sin, as the angels who kept their first estate already are, and the spirits of the just made perfect, of our own race. They are so it is true, from a Divine providence, but that providence is no less a law of mind than it is a Divine economy. The first man, then in himself comprising the race of whose

future myriads, he was to become the father, enters upon his moral career by awaking to the perception of moral truth, or a perception of good and evil, just as his descendants first become conscious of moral distinctions. This original state of man, then, may, in reference to his moral history, be designated the infancy of the race.

It is impossible for me to attempt to set forth in detail, the divine economy in the work of man's moral development. Looking back upon the sad experiences, the enormities and retributions recorded in the Bible concerning the early history of the race, we can see that they were for a purposed effect. They were exhibiting to the race, and forcing upon its recognition the necessity for a system of divine and human law,—comprehensive, clear and immutable for the government of men, and also developing the principles upon which such law should rest. No one can carefully read the history of the race down to the exodus from Egypt, without observing how crude and imperfect in those primitive times were men's moral ideas, the marked abstinence by the Almighty from enunciations of general laws and principles, and how low a standard of morality God was content to accept, and even to require. He seems to have treated mankind as immature and ignorant children, and when He imparted instruction, it related only to particular cases; as if a knowledge of abstract moral principles was as yet not to be expected of men. Having passed through the requisite preliminary training, the world was prepared for its next great step in its moral history, the revelation of the moral law, exhibiting with divine authority and completeness, the whole code of human obligation. This was the law given by Moses. It will be remarked, however, that the law thus given sought chiefly to regulate or suppress man's evil propensities by

prohibitions and commands, rather than to do so by imbuing the heart with spiritual affections, whose superior strength should supplant and prevent those tendencies to evil. Ages of experience under it proved that neither the race as such, nor the individual man, could be brought up from a sinful state to holiness, could be redeemed, sanctified, and perfected, except by means which the same mosaic revelation divinely foreshadowed,—the scheme of redemption and atonement typified in the Jewish system of sacrifices and ordinances. Thus the law was a school-master to bring the race to the Christian dispensation. The moving cause of creation was Divine love. God did not create the universe for His own sake, but because He desired the existence of beings in His own image and likeness, whom He might make happy from Himself. Hence the ultimate divine purpose in creation is the formation of a heaven out of the human race. Thus earth, rightly considered, is the seminary of heaven—a place in which man begins to exist, and in which he may develop an angelic character to fit him for the higher uses, and the more exalted felicities of the eternal world. “In the fulness of time” therefore, was inaugurated the third great stage in man’s moral advancement, by the advent of the promised Messiah, and the publication of His gospel. Christianity was the complement of Judaism. It followed up the work of moral discipline with that of atonement, justification and sanctification. It accepted what had been already accomplished, and pursued the labor still farther into the innermost chambers of the heart.

The incarnation of Christ, which was “the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord,” did not hinge upon the entrance of sin, was not an after-thought, a make-shift, an episode, a provisional economy to tide over a hidden reef. It

was the preordained culmen of creation. In the first Adam all would have been unsafe. In the last Adam, "the council of Jehovah standeth forever." It belonged to the divine ideal of man, that he should inherit everlasting life. Such was the significance of the "tree of life" in the midst of the garden. When man shall have entered into the heavenly state he will not be independent. Self-sufficiency belongs to God alone. It is a necessity of man's nature, that he should live, move, and have his being in God. His subsistence will be in the God Incarnate. "Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us" through His glorified humanity. Perfected man could not be severed from the Christ at any period of the coming eternity, without losing the life he has from Him.

Our humanity is no longer in its infancy, and like a babe in "need of milk, instead of strong meat" which "belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." Our race has entered into the period when its previous education has ripened, and truth begins to bring forth her perfect fruits. How great the harvest shall finally prove is known to the Infinite alone. The last great stage will be as was the beginning, conducted under His own personal supervision. Man, the perfect—or perfected—man in Christ Jesus, once more innocent, not then as at the first, from moral ignorance, but from a matured moral wisdom and strength—in God's image, not merely in a natural, but in a spiritual likeness also, will again walk with his maker. Creation was born in the evening. The first swing of the pendulum of the clock of time, marked the first instant of the evening. "The Evening and the Morning were the first Day." The same law holds good in the history of each individual man. His earliest beginnings in embryo

are in darkness and the peril thereof. How long that evening is, when we attentively regard it? Months and no senses; then senses and months before any child can use them. Intellect lies like a landscape in the night. Then the dawnings of intelligence show mind more and more.

The Bible follows nature on this same type. Its Day begins in the darkness of the original state of the universe, and emerges in the cosmos of an orderly physical, intellectual and moral world. It begins with man groping through the bye-ways of earth, and ends with man walking in the open golden streets of the New Jerusalem. It begins with the evening of Adam, and ends with the morning of Jesus. In that final heavenly Paradise, the description of which closes the Bible, as that of the primal and earthly Eden commences it, it is proclaimed that "the Tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He Himself shall dwell with them, their God." Then "there shall be no sorrow, nor pain, nor crying, and no more curse," and man shall again "have right to the tree of life, which shall stand by the river in the midst of the city," as of old "in the midst of the garden," for to "him that has overcome," the divine companionship—with freedom, rest and immortality, will be no longer incompatible with the knowledge of good and evil.

The personal application of the doctrine of human depravity as I have presented it, is involved in the fact, that within each one of us there are two beings as it were, wrapt up in one—two natures, two characters, two principles, striving for the mastery. This truth, which is one of the profoundest mysteries of our nature, the Bible fully acknowledges. We see it in the dark struggle within the simple mind of the author of Ecclesiastes, and in the contention which is described between the regenerate and unregenerate man,

in the seventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. We see it, not only in the two-fold character of Jacob, but in that of David. We see it in the flux and reflux of the better mind of St. Peter, in the division of the mind of St. Paul. We see it in the long history of Christendom—the mixture of the hypocrite and the saint—the union of the coward and the hero, the fool lurking in the innermost mind of the wisest, the filthy thought ensconcing itself in the crystal heart of the purest. We see it in the old theological Adam striving to maintain his own against the new Christian spiritual Adam. We all, in our day, pass through the same experience as the primeval father. As innocent merry children, we walk blithely by our parent's side, the butterflies of humanity, sipping each innocent pleasure. But before a score of years have passed over our heads, we eat of the fruit of knowledge, and experience disappointment, shame, and remorse. Before we reach maturity we learn much, but innocence and purity are the fee we pay for our schooling. We fall as naturally as our first parents fell, let us strive to rise with the ripe fruits of experience. We purchase knowledge, let us use it to limit our labors to lasting gains. Then Adam's example shall have worked its mission, when, men created a little lower than the angels, at length shall equal them.

THE INCARNATION.

ON the Dissertation of the nature and attributes of God, we found that the terms used to explain the doctrine of the Trinity were so conceived in the metaphysics of a by-gone age, that nine out of ten persons of the present age could not understand them. The heart remained untouched, realizing nothing but the sense of its own emptiness. But did we therefore come to the conclusion that the doctrine of the Trinity was itself in every sense a mere figment of theology? I think not. On the contrary we found that this doctrine had something in it at the bottom, which was truth, if only that fundamental truth could be presented to the human mind in such a form that the mind could receive it. In view of this necessity for re-statement, I proceeded to point out with reference to the Trinity a way, aside from any metaphysical hypothesis, in which the doctrine can be explained on what I may call a practical or experimental basis. Having done so, I now proceed to discuss the great doctrine of the Incarnation from a similar point of view and in the same practical manner, premising that as the doctrine is so interwoven with other doctrines, and I have so much to say about it in connection with them that I will have little to say about it apart.

The doctrine of the Incarnation is the great central truth of our holy faith ; but it is a mystery of which we should speak only in accents of humility and reverence. I wish to remind you of the manifestations of growth and development in the Divine economy, and to the evidences that God has an orderly and progressive place in all His works which existed in the mind of God before the world was. When He made man He designed him to become an inhabitant of heaven, and His providence has ever been working to that gracious end. God created all things because he is infinite love, and therefore desires the existence of beings whom He could make happy from Himself. He created man because His infinite love desired the existence of intelligent beings who could love Him through their own volition in return. All God's providence has been the outworking of his infinite love. It has had this one object, to lead man to the knowledge and love of God.

Man by nature was endowed with reason and intellect, with a mind and with a soul. He had the power to hold converse with God ; but this intercourse was held only at a distance, there was yet no spiritual communion. Nothing which could strictly be called a union between the creature and the Creator. But from the beginning it was the intention that such a union should one day exist, for we are told, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning," and that union exists now, and will exist through all eternity. Need I say what that connecting link was to be, whereby God designed to bind man to Himself? What that bond of union is? It is that mystery which "from the beginning of the world had been hid in God," and which at the great day of the Annunciation was revealed to Mary by the Angel Gabriel ; "Hail thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." "The Word was

made flesh," and there was thenceforth a "mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." The Incarnation was the complement of creation and a more complete manifestation of the love and wisdom of God than even Revelation and Providence. It involved and provided for a spiritual creation without which the purpose of the first would not have been realized. This aspect of the Incarnation, to wit: That it was designed from the first "in the fullness of time to gather together all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him;" this aspect of the coming of our blessed Lord in the flesh seems most in harmony with many passages of Holy Scripture which otherwise would be exceedingly difficult of explanation. Thus St. Paul speaks of the "eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." And St. Peter tells us that Christ was "foreordained before the foundations of the world." This view also would seem more in accordance and harmony with what we are taught in Holy Scripture, concerning the nature and attributes of God, than if we were to regard the Incarnation as a supplementary plan, as it were forced upon God as a remedy for man's wilfulness in sinning.

All life and power emanate from God as a perpetual and constant cause. The creation of the material universe, or of human beings is not a fiat, the effect of a spoken word. They are a perpetual emanation—a birth, a flowing forth. The universe was not once created and assigned over to the keeping of certain laws and then essentially disconnected from its Creator. The cause perpetually operates. Material bodies have no more power in themselves to maintain their form than they had to create it. We know this from our own observation. All power of existence and action is God's power in us. "In Him we live, and move,

and have our being." Our life comes from God relatively the same as light and heat from the sun. They are not once created and then remain. They are continually created. If the sun were destroyed, the light that is now in the universe would not remain in it; and all the planets would not only be involved in darkness but would perish. In the same way all spiritual and natural life is a continual gift from God. Man is an organic form, created by God to receive life from Him, and to be made happy by its reception. If you will lay aside all theories and doctrines for a moment, and look at the material body as it is, you will see that it is an organic form, fitted to be operated upon by the soul within and the material world without, to receive life from God through them, in various ways and degrees. It has no life which it does not continually receive. The moment the light ceases to flow into the eye, all power of seeing is lost. The sound dies away in the ear when the air ceases to vibrate and fall upon it. In the same way the soul, which is a spiritual organism, has no life in itself, and receives it as an overflowing gift from God. Now if God be a being of infinite love and wisdom, and made man to be a recipient of His life, how could He fail to adapt that life to him in all states, the lowest as well as the highest? Both Scripture and Reason declare that God assumed a human nature, because His relations to man were such that He could in no other way carry out His gracious purpose of preparing Him for heaven.

Step by step God had been raising the race up and training it for its ultimate destiny. He had already given the moral law but now the law was to be written in the heart. Man was to be controlled no longer by prohibitions and commands but by spiritual affections, and to reach him it became necessary that God should adapt Himself to man's state, not from any lack of power in God

to give, but in us to receive. You cannot instruct or guide a blind man by the eye or gesture. You cannot teach a deaf man by sound, you cannot warn him of any danger or direct him to any good by voice. You can only control and guide him by the sense of touch. You must come close to him ; you must take him by the hand and lead him. Now if man were spiritually blind and deaf, how could God help him in any other way than by coming to him in a form adapted to his state? To say that God is omnipotent does not remove the difficulty. It is not the want of sufficient power but of power adapted to the end for which it is to be exerted. The whole subject is capable of illustration by many things in nature and in human life. It is a well-known fact, that it is intensely cold on the top of high mountains, and that the cold increases as we ascend. The reason is not that there is less heat, or less of those activities which cause heat, whatever they may be, but it is owing to the rarity of the atmosphere. The calorific element is so subtle, that it must be clothed with a denser medium like the atmosphere, and the atmosphere itself must be dense as it is near the surface of the earth, before it can sensibly affect the human body, or other material objects. Unless the pure element of heat were so clothed with a grosser form the earth would be desolate and bare of all vegetable and animal life, through revolving in the ocean of pure Solar fire and light. Now suppose this to be the state of the earth, and the question arises how can it be made habitable for plant, animal, and man? Must the sun give forth an intenser heat and a more brilliant light? No. It must clothe its heat which is the life of all material things, in a grosser element ; it must come down from its essential purity, and adapt itself to the nature of the objects it desires to act upon. Is it not so? In the same analogous man-

ner God, by the Incarnation, veiled the brightness of His glory in a material form that He might adapt it to the end He desired to accomplish. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai his face shone with such brightness that the Israelites could not bear to look upon it. We can hardly glance at the unveiled glory of the Sun. How then could He approach us, but through a mediator who is light itself ; whose intense splendors outshine the Sun farther than the Sun outshines the faintest spark of the glow worm ! Truly God out of Christ would be a consuming fire. A medium or a mediator was necessary, a bridge to span the gulf between man and God, and that medium must be a human nature in its most sensuous and material forms, on the other side. Such a nature Jehovah assumed and by means of it, established a direct communication between Himself and man, and brought His saving, life-giving power to bear upon him. Such briefly, were the real relations of man to God and out of them grew the necessity for the Incarnation. Man was like a branch severed from a vine, or united to it only by a mere external, by some filaments of bark, as it were. By the assumption of a human nature, God formed a medium by which the connection between the branch and the true vine could be secured ; by which the branch could abide in the vine and the vine in the branch, and the vital forces of the root and trunk could flow into the branch, purge it at its death, its sins, and cause it to bring forth more fruit.

Some people find a difficulty in accepting fully the doctrine that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" thinking that it would seem to limit and restrict the Divine Being to a mere bodily presence and space. But any such supposition can only arise in the minds of those who have a very imperfect conception of the omnipotence of God. We are not to believe that the human

body of our Lord contained in its own limits all the fullness of the Godhead, while it retained any of the finite and imperfect nature of the mother. For although it is true that the union of the Godhead with the manhood in the person of Christ, was initiated at His conception in the Womb of the Virgin Mother ; so that from the first, Christ was very God as well as very man, yet we are taught that the humanity assumed had to be renewed, sanctified and perfected through trials and sufferings until, having passed through the gates of death, it became finally fully assimilated to the Divine Nature, and was, in the "fullness of the Godhead," the recipient of all power in heaven and on earth. Thus may we believe in regard to the Incarnation, that a spiritual emanation of the Divine Substance—to use our Lord's words, "proceeded forth from God." "God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God," as the quaint language of the Nicene Creed, well and tersely explains this truth. Or to quote Tertullian, "Thus did Spirit constitute another of Spirit—God another of God, *not in point of number* but of form. That Ray of God having entered into a virgin and made itself flesh in her womb, was born as a man united with God." He was subject to all the laws that every human being is subject to. He learned truth as every child learns it. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." He violated no laws of physical or mental growth. Every step from His conception to His resurrection, was ordered by infinite wisdom, and taken with direct reference to its bearings upon the great work of the Redemption. He was always "about His father's business." The assumed nature was always controlled and directed in every particular in the best way to make it a perfect medium of accomplishing the Divine Purposes of love to man ; to prepare it to become the perfect mediator between God and man.

"The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father," did not, so to speak, leave His heavenly throne, He did not change his character as "the Prince of Peace." He was the same ever loving and all Wise Being, but he placed Himself, by the Incarnation, in a new relationship to man. He came down to our conditions to make us partakers of His Divine life. "God in Christ" passed through all the stages of human existence, from infancy to manhood, that He might sanctify and become an energizing principle to them all.

I have before expressed my opinion very emphatically concerning the dogmatic theology of the day. It is a very complicated fabric, the growth of ages not always enlightened, and is therefore involved in many incongruous statements and definitions difficult to explain or harmonize satisfactorily, and this is particularly the case with what it teaches in regard to the divinity of our blessed Lord. I would be the last to reject revelation on account of its mysteries, but it is folly to prefer the mystery to the sunlight. Keeping in mind our Lord's dual nature—Divine and human—it is easy to understand those texts of Scripture in which, when speaking of Himself, He makes use of words containing ideas of different personality, without resorting for explanation to the gross and complex tritheistic sophistries of the schoolmen. One may well be amazed at the boundless arrogance, the haughty, awful impudence of the thing, that man should dare to say on so august a subject so much more than God has been pleased to reveal—that he should presume to formulate an analysis of the inmost nature of Deity, and demand assent to it under penalty of anathema. I need not recount the numerous instances in which our Lord speaks of the union existing between Himself and the Father, but you remember His sweetly sad conversation with His disciples, just previous to His betrayal, as described by St. John. On that

solemn occasion, when the Redeemer seemed so willing to unbosom all His secrets to His disciples, notwithstanding all the revelations He then, and had previously, made to them concerning Himself, He nevertheless, with marked emphasis, said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." What those things were which were withheld from disclosure, on account of the inability of His auditors to properly receive, we cannot know. They may have been, and probably were, some fuller revelations about Himself." In answer to Philip's request, "Lord, show us the Father," Jesus had answered, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Possibly, could the full truth have seized His disciples that He, whom they had so long known as the carpenter of Nazareth, was indeed the great God : that seated by Him, pondering over the strange words He spoke, they were in the immediate presence of the embodied Jehovah, it would have been impossible to have borne up against the overpowering thought. The entire realization of that great truth was to grow upon them, as the Spirit should bring one thing after another to their remembrance and reveal to them their full import. It is certain, however, that notwithstanding all the proofs that our Divine Redeemer had submitted to them in that direction, His disciples yet comprehended His divinity but imperfectly ; and may it not be that the Church to-day, in regard to the full comprehension of our Lord's divinity, is still feeding on "milk" instead of that "strong meat" that belongeth to them that are of full age !"

There has always been a great diversity of opinion as to what was the object of the Incarnation and who was incarnated, and thousands of books have been written to explain these points. The

idea of debt seems to be such a happy solution of the whole question that many persons have accepted it as an illustration of the relation of man to God. By Sin man had incurred a debt which he could never pay. He had sinned against the infinite Being and had thereby incurred an infinite debt, and he was about to be cast into the great prison-house of the universe, with no hope of release until he had paid the utmost farthing. At this critical juncture the Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity steps in as a Saviour, and says, "I will pay the debt ; you demand an infinite price and I will pay it," and he gives Himself. He becomes incarnated and suffers all that the whole world of sinners would have suffered, and thus He purchases their pardon. Now God can freely forgive them, since the demands of His justice are satisfied. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile such a theory with the Divine Unity. Two distinct beings are necessarily implied—beings of quite different, if not opposite characters. If they are the same and have the same character, the Son ought to demand justice as well as the Father. If the justice of the one demands satisfaction, why does not the justice of the other also? Again, according to this theory, the being called Jehovah in the Old Testament, did not come into the world—He sent His Son. It was the Second Person in the Trinity who came, and who is the Saviour and Redeemer. But this is directly contrary to the most explicit and oft-repeated declarations of Scripture. It is much to be regretted that theological terms are used, which distract the mind from the simple verities of the Gospel, deprive it of any distinct object of worship, and pervert language to a signification quite different from the scriptures, and which never entered into the minds of the early Fathers of the Church. Tertullian, one of the earliest Christian writers very aptly says : *Difference and number*

are not in God, so far as He is conceived of in His eternal, immovable being, but merely so far as He is regarded in motion. When a ray proceeds from the sun, it is a part of the whole, but the sun will be in the ray, for the ray is a ray of the sun and does not break loose from the substance thereof, but merely dilates itself."

"The first of all the commandments is, the Lord our God is our Lord." "Hear O Israel Jehovah, our God is one Jehovah." "I am Jehovah, and there is *none else*; there is no God beside Me." "Who is God save Jehovah, or who is a rock save our God?" "I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour, I am Jehovah thy God; there is no Saviour besides me." "I Jehovah, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." These are only a few passages of the same import. Language cannot affirm a truth in plainer and more forcible terms than is affirmed in these passages, that the Being called Jehovah is the only Saviour, that there is none beside Him. In other places, as if to avoid all possible grounds for mistake, Jehovah is declared to be the person who was to come, and who did come to save men. "And it shall be said in that day: Lo this is our God; we have waited for Him, and he will save us. This is Jehovah: we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." "The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a high way for our God. And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. Behold the Lord Jehovah shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him." "Jehovah shall go forth and fight against those nations, and His feet shall stand in that day, upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem."

In other places the Saviour is called Jehovah our Righteousness, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Alpha and the Omega,

the Beginning and the Ending, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty, To the question then who came into the world? who was incarnated? The Bible answers—Jehovah—the only God of Heaven and earth. Jehovah Himself came into the world moved by His own infinite love, and in the way provided by His infinite wisdom. His human nature was begotten by His Divine nature and therefore they bear the relation of Father and Son; as it is written: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore* also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

But think for a moment of the light in which the popular theory in regard to the Mission of the Messiah of which I have spoken, represents the Divine character. According to it, God demands so much suffering for so much sin. It is no matter *who* suffers so that the exact amount is inflicted. The law on the contrary is: “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” In all offences against Government civil or moral, the debtor must pay the debt. The relation is not one of contract according to which, one party is paid an equivalent for some good, or receives damages for some loss. The law not only requires the penalty, but the whole force and intent of the law is evaded, unless the one who breaks the law pays the penalty; God’s justice is not therefore eminently set forth in the way commonly represented. But on the contrary, it makes Him the most unjust Being in the universe. It represents Him as violating the first principle of justice in His efforts to obtain it—of violating His own law for the purpose of maintaining its sanctions. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, our Lord has given us a perfect picture of His relations to the sinner. The “certain man” represents God; the younger son, the sinner. See how entirely opposite the

whole spirit and scope of the common doctrine of the mission of our Lord is to the plain meaning of this parable. If the popular theory were true, the Father ought to stand aloof from his repentant son ; He ought to demand compensation for his wasted estate ; He ought to visit him with condign punishment for his ingratitude and sins, and refuse to see him until *some one* had given him full satisfaction. The elder son, who was indignant because his father would heap blessings upon the young prodigal who had wasted his father's living with harlots, was a more correct representation of God according to the common theory, than the father. But how different is the actual fact ! The paternal heart overflowing with love and pity for his lost son, yearns to embrace him. He does not wait for satisfaction ; it is satisfaction enough that he has seen the error of his ways, and is willing to come back. He does not hesitate for fear that all paternal authority will be destroyed if he forgive him. No. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." He would not listen to his erring but penitent son's request, to be made as one of his hired servants. His reply was, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet ; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry ; for this my son was dead and is alive again ; he was lost and is found."

Our Lord teaches us the same truth in other parables. Indeed He seems to exhaust every method of expressing His love for us, and of showing us how ready He is to forgive and bless us, if we will only permit Him to do it. He does what He commands us to do. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,

and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; *that ye may be the children of your Father* which is in heaven ; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Time would fail me to quote the passages in which He plainly declares that He came to reveal divine truth to men, to bring the divine life down to them, and to open their eyes to see it. He says nothing about satisfaction, about the payment of debt. He is the Good Shepherd, the Great Physician, the Perfect Teacher, the Faithful Exemplar in every work. The Scriptures plainly teach that Jehovah, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, assumed human guise as the Prince of Peace to make us at one with Him, and to reconcile the world to Himself. He finds His children blind, naked, starved, in prison, diseased, dying—He opens their eyes ; He clothes them ; as the Good Shepherd He feeds them with His own flesh and blood—His love and truth ; as the Almighty Saviour He throws open the prison doors and looses them from the fetters of sin ; as the Great Physician He heals their diseases ; the only Source of Life, He gives them life. As the Captain of our Salvation, He trod our path, He tasted our cup, He laid down His life that He might help us to lay down ours ; He took it again that He might assist us in regaining ours. Could infinite love do less ? Could infinite power do more ? For the doctrine of the Incarnation, the Church had to maintain a fight which was protracted through many centuries. We in these last days may be shocked at the presumption of the theologians of those days in venturing with their logic into the mysterious depths of the Divine Nature, and for endeavoring to frame definitions when they ought to have fallen prostrate in adoration. But after all, in the metaphysics—the unintelligible metaphysics if you will—which framed so large a por-

tion of the theology of the early church and which is perpetuated in the ancient creeds, let us believe that the real and ultimate strife was not so much for a theory of the Divine Nature, but for that perfect faith in God's love for us, which the truth of the Incarnation inspires, and of which it is the sure and enduring defence.

There are aspects of nature which sometimes make it difficult to realize that there can be any real communion between the Creator and ourselves. Those of us who live in great cities are perhaps especially sensitive to the austere influences of the material universe. Its vastness—its grandeur sometimes oppress us—resting on some lofty eminence with the foundations of the granite mountains beneath us, and their jagged peaks rising into the clouds above, or standing on the shore of some desolate sea, unwhitened by a solitary sail, or lifting our eyes to the heavens at night, knowing what our forefathers did not know about the immense magnitude of the stars—about their number—and about the enormous distances which separate them from each other and from us—we are crushed by the sense of our insignificance. If we perish, what difference would it make in the stupendous universe? The mountains would stand firm—the tides would continue to ebb and flow—the stars would rise and set—the bracken would still turn brown on the hillside in autumn, and the wild-flower would fill the plain with beauty in the spring, the shining brooks would continue to make their pleasant music just as before. David went to look at the shining heavens, and asked, “What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man that Thou visitest him?” Nature came between him and God, until nature was transfigured by the power of a victorious faith, and then the heavens became the symbol of a diviner glory, and the deeps the echo of a mightier voice, and the wealth of celestial harvests the expression of celestial love. But

through the Incarnation we have received a richer and fuller revelation than that which was the strength of David's faith, and which was vouchsafed to the Jewish race—a revelation anticipating, and perhaps augmenting as well as anticipating, the moral conditions of a more complex civilization and a more varied intellectual life. For if in these Christian times, the light is more intense than it was, the shadows too are deeper. We have a fuller and richer revelation because Christ Jesus the Eternal Word, the Brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His Person was made flesh and dwelt among men.

The deep desire of every earnest soul is to know God—"Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." And to the soul so yearning to know God, the Saviour answers as He answered Philip—"Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" The attempt to think of God as He is in the infinite abyss of His own absolute nature, must ever be futile. The mind becomes confused in the effort to soar so far above the necessary limitations of human thought. But in Jesus—"God manifest in the flesh," ever present by His life-giving Spirit, we have a revelation suited to our wants. God in Christ is so brought down to our spiritual state that He can be a subject of rational thought and an object of rational love. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and Man, the *Man*, Christ Jesus." By the Incarnation and glorification of the human nature, God enabled Himself to operate on human minds and hearts in a way in which He did not previously operate. The communication to man of the Divine operative power of "God in Christ," the gift of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son fore-ordained from eternity, was the grand universal and certain result of the birth and glorification of Jesus Christ.

THE ATONEMENT.

I have endeavored to controvert some of the popular fallacies in regard to the great event which occurred in the garden of Eden—an event which, whatever ground there may be for difference as to the previous character and position of our first parents, or the precise nature of the change that was effected by it upon them, it is indisputable that it occasioned in some way or other, the most remarkable and important revolution that humanity has ever undergone. By it was wrought that momentous change that altered at once, the personal relation of man to his maker, and fixed the future destinies of the whole human race.

By it, it resulted that sin came into the world, “and death by sin.” Sin—a mystery into which we can go no further than to say, that freedom of will in a created being seems to involve the possibility of sin. Difficult to understand, yet, the sad fact remains, that sin exists in the world, and I now purpose to speak of the divine method of salvation from its ravages, commonly called the atonement.

Anybody familiar with the writings of the apostolic fathers, could point out a peculiarity in them, both Greek and Latin, which at first might cause a little surprise. It is this—that they seem to

have had, comparatively speaking, very little definite theory about the atonement, beyond the fact that it was in some way a sacrifice for sin. They treated the subject in general terms, without appearing to care to enter into any detailed examination of it. They speak of the death of Christ, devotionally, rather than theologically, and in the language of Scripture, rather than in dogmatic terms. The patristic view looks mainly to the effect of Christ's sacrifice on us ; whereas modern theology, chiefly to its effect upon God. The early fathers did not teach, as Luther and others have since, that the sacrifice of our Blessed Lord, was to supersede our imperfect satisfaction ; but to give strength and value to man's efforts and strivings, which, in themselves, they should not have. Thus St. Athanasius quaintly says in illustration of this view:—"As when a great being enters some large city, and takes up his abode in one of the houses, much honor thereby accrues to the whole city, and no enemy or plunderer dares to assault it, because of the being who resides in one of the houses ; even so with the King of Kings ; He entered our own province of humanity, and took up His residence in one of its kindred bodies, and forth with every machination of mankind's enemy was arrested, and so death's power of corruption, which heretofore had prevailed over men, was abolished—for all the human race would have perished, had not the Lord and Savior of all, the Son of God, intervened to put an end to death." To the saints of old it was the Incarnation which was the centre of christian faith, as of christian life. Instead of looking upon the death of Our Blessed Lord on the cross, as an isolated act, or even an isolated sacrifice, as the popular theology of modern times views it ; they regarded it as the consummation of the self-devotion and sacrifice comprehended by our Lord's entire life on earth. The death of Christ is

not to be looked upon apart from His life. He was "the Christ," the Anointed One—our great High-priest, anointed for His priesthood in His mother's womb. He was our High-priest throughout His earthly life. He is our high-priest still in heaven, and through all eternity will ever live to make intercession for us, and sustain us by the life-giving properties of His glorified humanity. And so in speaking of our redemption, the holy gospels do not dwell exclusively upon the death of Christ, but exhibit the facts and the words of His earthly ministry. For instance, we read:—"For this cause the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." Here it is rather His life than His death to which is referred. Yes, by His victory over the tempter; by His miracles of mercy; by His perfect obedience; by His pure teachings; by the calling of the apostles; by the institution of His church, as well as by His crowning act of self-devotion on Calvary, He broke the power of sin.

Again, when He says of himself: "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly," He speaks not so much of the forgiveness of sin as of the engrafting on our human nature a new principle of life through union with Him. God might have lived for Himself, but He laid this among the fundamentals: nothing must exist for itself alone. He is now living for others constantly. He wrought that principle in every atom of matter. He enforced it in all the physical forces. He adopted it for his own rule of working, and as the basis of His kingdom in the hearts of men. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself" is our Lord's summary of the commandments, and thus the fulfilment of the law is to be found in the principle of self-sacrifice.

Now the self-sacrifice of our Lord began by His emptying Himself of His glory and taking upon Himself the form of a servant. It continued through His whole life of suffering till the stone was rolled to the mouth of the tomb wherein His body was laid. It was exhibited in the spotless purity of His life as man on earth, and it was crowned by His endurance of death upon the cross. The orbs of heaven shine not for themselves, but give forth their light and their warmth. The flowers of earth bloom not for themselves, but yield their beauty and their fragrance. And He who made heaven and earth, the great law-giver Himself, conforms to this universal law of sacrifice. We shrink from sacrifice and we are drawn towards it. It is at once so difficult and so consolatory. Have you ever looked intently upon the moon when it has not been full? Have you seen a part shining brightly while the rest was shrouded and almost quite dark? So it is with many spiritual truths which are perplexing and difficult—they have a dark side and a bright one. So it is with this great doctrine of sacrifice in its various phases. Very difficult is it to think of—this suffering which has always been in the world, this constant death and sacrifice in a thousand shapes. Look back, for instance, long before the advent of man to this earth; look back and see those mighty lizards tearing each other to pieces in the slimy mud and primeval marshes of the early world. We know that they did so, because we find these creatures inside each other's skeletons; we know that they must have lived upon each other, must have destroyed and devoured each other. We dig up their remains constantly in the fossil state, dreadful witnesses to this fearful and dark law of sacrifice—vicarious sacrifice; one creature sacrificed to keep another alive. And around us at this hour the same spectacle is going on; we see the poor feeble animal falling a prey to the

stronger one, and even man himself preys not only on the lower animals, but he preys upon his fellow-men. I am not alluding to cannibalism, but I am speaking in a larger sense of the way in which human beings are not only sacrificed to the cupidity and deceitfulness of others, but to the wants and necessities of others. You and I every day have a share in this. We cannot help it, the law of sacrifice is so intimately interwoven with our civilization. We are so constituted in the body politic that we cannot help other people involuntarily suffering for our benefit, and dying for us by what looks like a blind, pitiless law which they do not acquiesce in.

But there is voluntary sacrifice as well as involuntary sacrifice, and the moment sacrifice becomes voluntary, the dark law becomes eradicated ; we may not even then see very far, but we see a little way. Tell me, you who think that the doctrine of vicarious suffering is a doctrine without sense, and without reason, without moral dignity or justice, what do you make of all that high impulse which is in the world, which is in your own hearts ; all that great willingness to suffer and to sacrifice yourselves for others ? How is it that human society holds together at all ? Is it not because the good are willing to suffer for the bad ? Because they bear in their bodies, for the sake of the unthankful and the evil, the marks of the Lord Jesus ; because every high and pure and regenerating influence which is now upon earth, or ever has been in the world, has been under the law of vicarious suffering and sacrifice, by which the good come and stand between and prevent the guilty from bearing the full punishment or consequences of their sins. Yes ; and we must believe that in some inscrutable way this power of going forth, and giving one's self for others, entering into their sorrows and trials, becoming as one of them, in order to bear their

sorrows, belongs to God. We may not be able to put our thoughts into formularies, but it may be a living thought for all that. Creation is itself a kind of sacrifice, a coming forth of God, a giving of Himself to others, that they might have life, and have it more abundantly. And, still further, the preservation of man, or the continuous outflow of life-power from God, is sacrifice. But in regard to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ do not be superstitious. Do not think that the fact of pain is pleasing to God. This is one disastrous view of the atonement, which has made atonement, in one sense of the word, so incomprehensible, because it has been represented that God took a certain satisfaction in the actual pain and torment of the holy righteous and just One, which is impossible. It is one thing to be pleased when you see a noble creature put himself in the place of another, and receive pain for him ; it is quite another thing to take a holy, just and righteous person, and wreak the vengeance upon him which justly belongs, not to him, but to the offender. Yet this is the way in which the atonement has been sometimes brought before us ; as if there were some kind of necessity for vengeance somewhere ; as if it did not matter where it fell, so that if it fell upon the just, God was as well satisfied as if it had fallen upon the unjust. It is true *we are* satisfied when we see the innocent suffering for the guilty, but not in the sense in which God has been represented as satisfied with Christ's sufferings. When a man who is a good man builds a reformatory, and deprives himself of his money, we are satisfied ; we say he has taken upon himself to bear the sins of the guilty. When one who loves another puts himself between that other and the consequences of his frailty, and takes the responsibility of actions which are not his own, and suffers because he loves his brother, his sister, we are satisfied ; but it is not because a man has suf-

ferred so much pain, but because he has had that nobility of feeling to say to another, "I will put myself in your place, I will undertake for you." So it is with God. It is not that God arbitrarily smites the innocent for the guilty; but it is just this: there are certain moral laws in this world, which are designed for the well-being of the world, which are best for a man to live under, which are absolutely necessary, which are not to be twisted, but which must be conformed to, under penalty—natural, inevitable penalty; and those who do not understand, or will not understand and keep those laws, break them, and suffer the consequences; then it is lawful for one who does understand and obey them, to come to the help of the disobedient, and step in and save them from the consequences of their actions. Then you say the deliverer is smitten by God. Why, of course He is smitten by God in this sense, that the law remains which God has made good everywhere for everybody. He obeys it willingly, where the other has broken it; He comes into the collision in the breach, and is smitten. God has not taken a spear and pierced Him. God did not stretch Him on the cross; God did not slav Him arbitrarily for another's sins. He has stepped in—that is all—stepped into the place of suffering, and suffered vicariously. That is just what you do when you go among the vile and degraded, and the better you are the more you will suffer from the results of their unclean and filthy and wretched lives. You will suffer for their sakes. Certainly; but not in that sense in which He has been said to seize on an innocent, though willing, victim, and punish him for the guilty, and then retire with a sort of gluttoned frenzy, or, as theologians say, "satisfied justice." Justice! What kind of justice would that be? "Ah! but," we are told, "you know this is a violent proceeding on the part of the Creator from our point

of view, of course, but then the Creator's justice is of a different kind from ours!" I should think it was; of a very different kind indeed—so different a kind as to be called properly by the very opposite name. Tell me not God's justice is one thing, and man's another. If God's love is not the same as man's, then the word "love" has no meaning as applied to God. Divine justice is on an immensely larger scale, but it must be of the same description or character, different only in altitude and quantity, but not in quality; and if it is not of the same kind then the word justice has no meaning at all, and it is of no use to talk any more about Divine love and justice. Tell me it is of the same kind as mine, and I understand, but do not describe to me a horrible human crime, and call it Divine justice! "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is the irrevocable decree of eternal justice; *not* that some sinless being shall die for, or in the place of, the sinning soul, and his righteousness be imputed to the guilty. Everywhere does the Bible teach that man's union or spiritual at-one-ment with God—which is salvation—is wrought solely by a change in his own moral character. "For," as the holy apostle says, "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." *We* must be changed before the reconciliation can be effectual to us. *We* must be born again. *We* must be renewed in the spirit and temper of our minds. *We* must be re-created in the Divine image. We must become like our Heavenly Father—at-one with Him, in feeling and purpose. This is the plain and indisputable teaching of the Bible, as it is the clearly pronounced verdict of enlightened reason.

If our Lord by His sufferings and death, had made the most ample satisfaction to Divine Justice for man's disobedience, so

that according to the theory, God could be just and remit the penalty due to sin, it would not have removed a single obstacle in his way to heaven, for it would not in itself have conferred fitness for heaven. It would be of no permanent service to man to remit the penalty of sin, while the sin remained. It would not save him from spiritual death. Men have fallen into a fatal error in confounding sin with its penalty. They have mistaken the shadow for the substance, and have constructed theories of the Divine government and of human salvation upon it.

It is remarkable that in the Old Testament there is no special word for punishment. He will be punished is expressed with the words "He shall bear his iniquities." It is also a peculiarity of the same Scriptures, that the highest blessing is expressed in the words, "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee," and the phrase for the expression of the Divine anger is, "I will set my countenance against that man." The countenance of the Lord is always the same; but how differently seen by him who is laden with the burden of iniquity. And so the New Testament, in respect to Christ's mission, uniformly and clearly teaches that it was to effect salvation from sin itself rather than from its guilt or penalty. The Lord's mission upon the earth, His life, sufferings and death, had no special and direct reference to save man from punishment. If we can get a true idea of the work He really accomplished, we can hardly fail to see that there was no possible way of avoiding the sorrow, though strictly speaking, it contributed nothing to our salvation. Let us try to understand what he actually did. A Being of infinite love, wisdom, order and purity, assumed our mortal nature, as it existed in Mary, which is called in the scriptures "the natural man." It was full of hereditary evils. It contained in it the germ of every evil, and the seeds of

dissolution. It was utterly opposite to the Divine life within, in every respect. It was repugnant to every principle and every form of Divine activity. This is directly the reverse of the Papal doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and it may be supposed to imply the belief that our Lord sinned. But it does not. Evil is the tendency only ; sin is the voluntary carrying out of the tendency into act. Evil is the germ ; sin the ripe fruit. Our Lord assumed a human, not a Divine nature, and that nature was full of evil. There is a simple and unanswerable argument in favor of this truth. The Apostle says that Our Lord "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Now it is impossible for anyone to be tempted, unless there is some evil in his nature to appeal to. But there is no sin in being tempted. The sin consists in yielding. That Our Lord never did. Infernal ingenuity exhausted its illusions to make Him yield. Every natural evil was excited and made to hunger for its indulgence. The devil took Him up into an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said, "all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But He rejected them all. He fought against them all. He overcame them all. What awful conflicts must have raged within Him ? What sharp and terrible agonies must have rent His soul ! What an inconceivable amount of the intensest pain must have been crowded into the few years He dwelt upon the earth. Truly He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In the light of this truth we can see whence originated the bloody sweat and awful agony of Gethsemane, and the despairing cry from Calvary. The death of the material body was nothing. That was not the life He gave for man. The life he laid down was the life of the infirm humanity He assumed from Mary. It was the death of all

falsity. It was the utter despair of every evil desire. It was the same death that we, in our degree, must die before we can really begin to live. The glorification of His humanity is the perfect pattern of our regeneration, and renders it possible. No, our Lord did not come into the world to satisfy the demands of an inflexible and arbitrary justice. This mistaking the penalty of sin for the sin itself has been one of the most mischievous and destructive errors in theology. It has diverted the minds of men from the true object of their attention and fastened them on a mere abstraction, upon the shadow instead of the substance, the effect instead of the cause. It has taken the whole subject of man's relations to God out of the established order and harmony of the Divine methods, and substituted a mere legal fiction for it, an abstruse and artificial technicality, which bewilders the mind, outrages the reason, and changes the plain and simple precepts of the gospel into abstruse and groundless abstractions, and ends by representing God as practically evading his own law under the pretence of fulfilling it. Our blessed Lord's mission was rather to satisfy the demands of infinite love than of austere justice ; not to pay a debt, but to reach the dying soul, to cleanse it from its impurities, to heal its diseases, to mould it into his own image and likeness, and fill it with His own peace and blessedness. His death was not, therefore, the whole of the work of redemption. Our Lord declares the real truth when He says, "Because I live ye shall live also." His sufferings and death are the mere negative side of His work.

But do not understand me as teaching that the death of our blessed Lord was a mere ending of His mortal existence. No one had ever entered the world as He, and He left the world as no one ever had. His birth and His death are alike mysteries such as

“The angels desire to look into,” and ages of human speculation have failed to solve. That death was something more than the ending of a life of self-negation and obedience. In the transcendent mysteries of the spirit world there appears to have been an inexplicable necessity that the vital principle of Christ’s human nature should be poured forth in death that it might pass into man and regenerate him. The life of man was God’s gift and it involved the death of Christ as the essential condition of its communication. This truth is taught by the words of Christ in the sixth of Saint John and by his symbolic act of *breaking* the bread and *pouring forth* the wine in order that they might eat the one and drink the other. We also read that when our Lord first appeared to His disciples “He was known of them in breaking of bread.” The blood of Christ, too, is uniformly spoken of in Holy Scripture as a most living thing now communicable to us, and the efficacy of Christ’s death can never be understood, unless it be thus viewed as a divine act of spiritual power in which every member of the race *may* to his infinite blessing, but must in some way participate.

Thus, though the entire life of our Lord was a sacrifice for the sins of the world, His death was preëminently a sacrifice, nay, more, *the* sacrifice for those sins. And although we cannot fully understand how it was so, it plainly teaches us what a dreadful thing sin must be, seeing that to redeem mankind from its thralldom, the Lord of glory had to undergo so much. Brave soldiers meet their death without fear, much more God’s saints. We are wont to believe that the holier a man is the less his fear of dying. Some—a Ridley, a Latimer, have gone to a death of greater torture than the cross, with a smile on their face and cheerful words on

their lips. How was it that He whose holiness was infinitely beyond theirs, whose conscience knew no sin, to whom the other world was not a matter of faith only, but an open vision ; how was it that He, when the hour for dying approached, was filled with exceeding sorrow, overwhelmed with dread, crushed to the earth with an agony of spirit which forced the blood from His brow, straining to the very uttermost His human powers of endurance, so that in His extremity of suffering He prayed that the cup might pass from Him, yea, felt as though His father had forsaken Him—how was this? Why was this? What can all this mean? Surely there is something inexplicable about this death of Christ, making it totally unlike any other death of which we have ever read or heard, and the only explanation we have is, “for it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “Though He were a son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him.” The death of Christ! With deepest reverence of soul approach that most mysterious sacrament of love—note the patience of His trial, the meekness of His submission to injustice and the malignant passion of His enemies ; behold the creation itself darkening and shuddering with horror at the dreadful scene ; hear the cry of the crucified, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do,” and then regard the life that was manifested dropping to cessation to deposit itself in the bosom of that malignant world to whose enmity it was yielded. See in those drops of sacred blood the unspeakable desire God feels to win us from sin to establish the order of His realm and to hallow in our hearts for eternity, the sanctity of His law. Thus will you know enough of

the wondrous mystery of Calvary. I do not care to distinguish the natures and say of Christ, He did this as man and that as God. This only confuses the matter of his identity. The natures are mingled in one Being. I bow before the mystery and do not ask for its solution. It is commonly held that God is impassable, though we never hesitate to affirm that He is displeased thus or thus, and this displeased state is so far, of course, an unpleased or painful state. That it would be impossible for God by a mysterious union with the human to put Himself in contact with suffering, is a question far too exalted to be settled by dogma. We cannot thus intrude into the interior of God's mysteries.

The death of Christ!—When we wish to speak of this, we poor sinful men, speaking of an act of God on which depends our eternal weal or woe; it may seem that any mere doctrinal statement of it must be cold and hard, even to profaneness. All our words should shape themselves into prayers or hymns of adoration, and our only attitude should be that of worship. To speak of these things merely in the way of explanation, without stopping to dwell more fully on the thoughts and feelings which they ought to incite, must almost seem to encourage that dangerous habit of listening with unmoved consciences to truths which should be most humbling and awakening. Still it is not less true that the more we try to understand God's deeper dealings with mankind, the more we shall know of His goodness and wisdom, and the more reasonable will be the service that we render Him. We cannot tell how the offering of the body of Jêsus Christ is a sacrifice for sin, but though we cannot explain it, we still hold it fast as an undoubted and blessed truth that Christ bore our sins, but that He bore the *penalty* of our sins, never. Christ's death is uniformly spoken of in Scripture, as redeeming us, not from the

penalty of sin, but from sin itself, primarily. The central idea of the sin offering is not a vicarious satisfaction for sin, but a dying unto sin. Christ "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that He might bring us to God.*" He is "the Lamb of God which *taketh away* the sin of the world." "Who his own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, *that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness.*" Sin is not a debt merely; if so, it might have been cancelled by a word. Nor is it transgression merely, else it might be remedied by repentance. But sin is a spiritual disease that requires supernatural grace to heal. There has never been any exclusive theory of the atonement defined by the Church Catholic. In her corporate capacity, she seems to have thought that so long as the great truth of the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world was held fast, people might fairly be left to fill in the details as accorded best with their own tone of thought, or as suggested by their devotional feelings. Many theories have from time to time been set forth, but they are all of them unsatisfactory, and some of them in the highest degree repulsive. Thus a view of the atonement which was put forth at the time of the Reformation and which has now a wide acceptance, is to this effect:—Mankind had become utterly depraved by "The Fall," and God's word had declared, and God's justice required, that sin should be punished. But God's mercy willed that man should be spared. This difficulty was met by God's giving His Son to take upon Him man's nature and suffer in man's stead. He was treated as guilty and His brief agony on the cross in some way increased in importance by the dignity of His divinity was accepted as equivalent to man's endless torment. The principle of "Substitution" taught herein is known as the doctrine of Vicarious satisfaction, and it involves also the theory of "imputed righteousness," which is that

not only were our sins attributed to Christ, so that He was treated as guilty, but also that His righteousness is imputed to us, so that those who throw themselves upon Christ's merits are acquitted as though they were as holy as He. Such is an outline of this most unchristian system. A system which singularly enough teaches that the justice of God differs from that of civilized man, only as resembling that of primitive barbarism. Briefly as I have spoken of it, I hope I have said enough to warn you against mixing up with the doctrine of the Atonement such pernicious theories. They cloud our most primary conceptions of the attributes of God. And so it is, that men have come to complain that they cannot believe in a justice which strikes the innocent while it spares the guilty. They have asserted and not without reason, that they cannot understand a love which delays to forgive until it exacted rigorous compensation. It is obviously difficult to meet such objections as these, even to our own satisfaction, unless we have learnt that the notions which are thus attacked are no part of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, but merely the private theories, always fanciful, often heretical, of men within her fold.

The Rabbinical notion of substitution has entered very deeply into most modern systems of theology, which generally ascribe to the sufferings and death of our blessed Lord, all that the Jews have grossly taught respecting animal sacrifices. Such a theory is as much opposed to revelation as it is repugnant to reason. But it is no less true that the transcendent mystery of Divine mercy, designed from the foundation of the world, and consummated in that historic death on the Cross, was the grand original of which all those patriarchal and Levitical sacrifices were the faint copies. The sacrifices of the Mosaic law were not, however, meant to represent the punishment due to sin, but, on the contrary, a death unto

sin, and the hallowing of every affection of the heart and principle of the mind to God. The scape-goat, therefore, over whom alone confession of transgression was made, symbolized the deportation of sin, *not of its guilt or penalty*. Nothing can be more clearly proven by Scripture, than that the things offered in sacrifice, and burnt upon the altar, were to be considered as constituting a *feast* of which the Lord expressed acceptance in its consumption by fire. The altar is, therefore, sometimes called "the table of the Lord." The animal offered symbolized the oblation of a pure and holy life, and the placing of the hand upon the animal was to express communication between the offerer and the oblation. All the Mosaic law of sacrifices was fulfilled in and by the Lord Jesus Christ in a super-eminent manner, and thus, in its highest sense, has reference to Him. He condescended to our low estate, and hallowed every principle or element of His human nature to the Divine, so that in Him, man, or human nature in general, was reconciled to God. We, in our subordinate degree, as walking after Him, are to be living sacrifices too, but He is the great sacrifice, for through the glorification of our Lord's humanity, which was perfected by trials and sufferings, we have access to the Divinity. Our Lord teaches this truth very plainly when He says, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." What is the door but the medium of access? How accurately is this expressed by St. Paul: "there is one God," says the apostle, "and one mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus." The holy apostle takes care to guard us from supposing that His divinity mediates between us and some other Divine Person by thus expressly restricting this office of mediation to our Lord's humanity.

But it may be asked, how does this view of the subject agree

with the declaration that we are saved by the blood of Christ? That He purchased us with His own blood? That we are "justified," "propitiated," "redeemed," "brought nigh," "and saved by his blood?" I answer that it perfectly harmonizes with it in whatever sense the term "blood" is used. By the blood of Christ, the Apostles generally mean His sufferings and death; and this is doubtless the meaning generally attached to the word by Christians. The work He came to do, could not be effected without the shedding of His blood, and when it is declared that we are saved by the blood of Christ, that He purchased us with His blood, we must understand it in the same sense that we say that patriots killed in battle die for their country, and that they shed their blood for it. But everyone knows that the country is really not saved by the blood of its defenders, but by the defeat of its enemies. It is saved in fact by the shedding of the blood of its foes, rather than of its friends. Theologians have accepted this reasoning, but some have held that God regarded Christ as His enemy, and poured upon His innocent head the full measure of the indignation and wrath that was due to the sinner. But that a Being of infinite love and wisdom and truth, could pretend that His son was guilty when He was not, and punish Him as though He were a rebel against His righteous government, and guilty of all the foul crimes of a perverted and corrupt humanity—when He knew that He was as innocent and spotless from any stain of guilt as Himself—is a doctrine so repugnant to reason, so contrary to every principle of justice, and derogatory to the Divine character, that it seems to be only necessary to state it, to cause a prompt and indignant rejection.

But the blood of our Lord has another and more important

meaning than His sufferings and death, a meaning which avoids all these difficulties, and explains many passages of Scripture which otherwise have only a remote and doubtful signification. Thus we read, "The blood is the *life* of the body," "The *life* of the flesh is in the blood," "Be sure thou eat not the blood, for the blood is the soul or *life*." Remembering that "the blood is the life," we begin to see the real meaning of those Scriptures that speak in varying phrase, of our being regenerated by the blood of Christ—(the life of Christ infused into us) purging our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God; and that unless we drink His blood, we "have no life in us." If we are disposed to look a little deeper, we find that the blood of our Lord symbolizes Divine truth, which is the medium of spiritual life. If the material blood bears the same relations to, and performs the same offices for, the material body that the truth does for man's spirit; if it contain the very substance of the body, and is perpetually employed in cleansing, renewing, and re-creating the body, as Divine truth is in regenerating and developing the soul, we can see why the Divine Wisdom employs it in revealing Himself to man, and why such sacred, powerful and important influences are attributed to it in Holy Scripture. But we shall see this more clearly as we enter into particulars, and if any general principle be true as a whole, it must be true in every one of its least parts. We can see why the Lord directed the Israelites to sprinkle the blood of the pascal lamb upon the thresholds and door-posts of their houses. It represented the application of Divine truth to their minds; and no destroying angel can ever enter the soul, or even touch it with a breath of its curse, when that soul is imbued with and protected by Divine truth. What a striking and grand presentation of the protecting power of truth, when man is in bondage to evil, and

error. The Israelites represent the human soul enslaved by sin ; the Egyptians represent the evil and false principles that enslave it ; the destroying angel the inevitable consequences of sin, which can only be averted by the application of Divine truth to the soul. In this representation of Divine truth by blood, we find the reason why so much use was made of it in sacrifices, and why such particular directions were given by God for its use and disposition. In consecrating Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, Moses was commanded to take of the blood of a ram and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. The worship of the Jews was purely representative. God prescribed it with such minuteness and precision, that spiritual principles might have an exact counterpart and representative in natural things. If blood represents Divine truth, the application of it to Aaron and his sons, and to the altar, and sprinkling of it upon their garments, represents the application of truth to their minds, and to all those faculties of the mind, symbolized by the organs of the body, to which it was applied. How is man prepared to be a true priest of God, and a minister of the people, except by the application of truth to his mind ? He must hear it and obey it. It must be applied to his ear. He must do it. His very fingers must be employed in its service. He must walk in its ways. It must be applied to his feet. He must be consecrated by it. The more fully his understanding is filled and formed by Divine truth, and anointed by Divine love, which comes by, and is applied by truth, the better prepared he is to minister to the people. You may take every instance in which blood is used or mentioned in the Jewish ritual, and in every one it can be seen to

represent Divine truth. Blood was employed in consecrating covenants, after proclaiming the laws to the children of Israel. Moses sacrificed peace offerings and bullocks unto the Lord, and he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people, and they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do and hear, and Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people and said, Behold the blood of the covenants which the Lord hath made upon you in all these words. Now the covenant is always made by truth. Human minds approach each other by means of the truth. Truth shows these relations to each other, and determines them. It shows what each party to the covenant is to do ; who is to give, and who is to receive ; who is to command, and who is to obey. This is a universal law. It applies to man's relations to God as fully as to his relations to his fellow man.

There is therefore nothing arbitrary in the use of blood to sanction a covenant between God and man. It is simply the expression of that covenant in the lowest forms, in the language of nature as well as in the language of words. It is not a covenant of death but of *life*, which the blood by its very nature represents. Now we can take a step farther and see how it is that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. I simply state a fact known to all physiologists in saying that the body is constantly dying. We know how quickly it wastes away when it is deprived of food. The substance of the little cells which compose the primary organs is constantly passing away. The blood washes them and carries away the dead matter, which is no longer of use, and replaces it with living substance. This process is going on constantly. If it be interrupted for a moment natural life ceases. Is not this a perfect representative of one service which divine truth renders us? False principles and evil affections are the effete and dead

substances which poison the soul. Are they not removed by truth? Can they be removed in any other way, or by any other means? Take a man whose understanding is full of false principles, and whose heart is foul with sin, how can you reform him? "Sanctify them through thy truth," is the prayer of the Lord, and all the operations of cleansing and purifying the soul are attributed to truth. When, therefore, it is said the Lord has washed us in His own blood, which is divine truth, we can see that it is a literal fact. This washing is not affected in any vicarious way as the term is commonly used. Redemption consists in being rescued from the power of our spiritual enemies, whether these enemies are hosts and false principles, or wicked beings in this world or any other, the process is the same. A man is redeemed from disease and physical death through the blood. If the blood be pure, and can flow unobstructed through the whole system, it will soon redeem it from weakness and the power of all the enemies which would destroy it. So truth redeems us from error and all the evils which error causes.

Finally, we can see what our Lord meant when He said we must drink His blood, and that His blood is drink indeed. We can see also why it is that so much is said about eating flesh and drinking blood in the Prophets and other parts of the Bible. To drink the Lord's blood is to receive divine truth in our understandings and to incorporate it into our lives, as the natural blood becomes a part of our bodies. The blood of Jesus Christ, it is said, cleanseth from all sin. The robes of the redeemed whom St. John saw, were made white in the blood of the Lamb. He also calleth upon the seven churches "to give glory and dominion to Him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Now no one supposes that the material blood shed upon the cross

cleanses from sin. All persons, whatever be their doctrine, agree that it is not the blood itself but what it represents that saves us. They correctly regard the blood as a type representing something else, only many believe erroneously it is the type of death, whereas it is really the type of life. We are saved by being cleansed from sin by being cured from our spiritual diseases and by the application of divine truth to the dying soul. The shedding of His blood is not therefore an awful penalty rendered to a vengeful justice. It is the pouring out of our Divine Redeemer's truth and life into the hearts and understandings of man. His shedding it as the sun sheds its light and heat. It implies no implacable and enraged deity, no legal technicalities, no division of the personal unity of God, no sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty, no possible transfer of righteousness, no vicarious suffering in its dogmatic sense, and no imputed righteousness.

It seems a very unsatisfactory way of closing this Dissertation upon the Atonement, to say that if we knew ten times as much concerning the doctrine as we do, the result of our knowledge would be but to make us more conscious of our ignorance. The mysteries of Redemption are not to be dealt with by mere human reason and intelligence, and this we very soon find out. We may read and study and search, and though we may acquaint ourselves with certain facts and with the outlines of certain principles, we do not really get very much nearer the end. We can do little more than exclaim with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." Creation is a mystery. The Universe is a great mystery; but O the most profound mystery in all the

abysses of God's infinite majesty is here, in the work He does to unite us unto himself.

The main purpose of this Dissertation has been to set forth the doctrine of the Atonement in harmony with the teaching of the early Fathers of the church ; in harmony with the instincts of a healthy conscience ; and above all in harmony with the teaching of Holy Scripture. The deep comfort of the doctrine who can tell ? But it is not the comfort of sin being made less penal, it is not the comfort of being told that another has borne for us the punishment that we deserved. Infinitely deeper is the comfort of the Cross of Christ to those who know its power. It is the comfort of having our sense of sin so deepened that we learn to hate it with a perfect hatred. It is the comfort of a new hope and power within us, enabling us to crush and mortify sin more and more in all our members. It is the comfort of believing that in Christ sin hath been altogether crucified, and if we are in Him God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins now, and to sanctify us perfectly hereafter.

JUSTIFICATION.

Christ's work of mercy has two chief parts—what He did for all men, what He does for each ; what He did externally to us, what He does within us ; what He did in His own person, what He does by His Spirit, His work of atonement, and the application of it as our justification. Christ's mission ended when He left the world ; He was to come again, but by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit realizes and completes the redemption-wrought essence and virtue of Christ.

We know very little of the reasons of God's wonderful providences—why an atonement was necessary, why the Son of God was the sacrifice. Let us accept what is given, adore God's wisdom and be thankful and silent. But whatever be the deep reasons, this seems to be the rule of His counsels as to our justification, that as it was a necessary part of the atonement that there should be a material, local sacrifice of that "Holy Thing" conceived by the Holy Ghost, and "therefore" called "the Son of God"—a sacrifice made once for all—so there must be a spiritual, omnipresent communication of that sacrifice continually. God the Son atoned ; God the Holy Ghost justifies. Further, it would appear as if His going to the Father was in fact the same thing as His coming to us spiritually. I mean there is some mysterious connection between

His departing in His human personality and returning in His Holy Spirit. He said that unless He went away His Spirit would not come unto us, as though His ascending and the Spirit's descending, if not the same act, yet was very closely connected, and admitted of being spoken of as the same. And thus His rising was the necessary condition of His applying the virtue of that atonement which His dying had completed for all men. While He was on the cross, and while His body lay in the tomb, the treasure existed; the precious gift was perfected, but it lay hidden; it was not yet available for its gracious ends; it was not diffused, communicated, shared in, enjoyed. Thus He died to secure what He rose again to apply. "He died for our sins; He rose again for our justification." He died in the flesh; He rose again "according to the spirit of holiness," which, when He was risen, He also sent forth from Him, dispensing to others that life wherein He rose Himself. And here I have touched upon another part of the harmony of the Divine dispensation, which may be profitably dwelt upon. He is said to be "justified by the Spirit," as it would appear, because He was by the Spirit raised again, proved innocent, made to triumph over His enemies, declared the Son of God, and exalted on the holy Hill of Sion. It was said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," in which words He was recognized as the Dearly Beloved of the Father. This was His justification, and ours consists in our regeneration also, and His was the beginning of ours, as joint heirs with Him. The Divine life which raised Him flowed over, and availed unto our rising again from sin and condemnation. It wrought a change in His sacred manhood, which became spiritual without His ceasing to be man, and was in a wonderful way imparted to us as a new creating, transforming power in our hearts. This was the gift bestowed on the Church

upon His ascension ; for while He remained on earth, though risen, it was still withheld. During the interval too, if we may speak without presumption, He seems to have been in an intermediate state, passing by an orderly course from what He had been to what He is in glory. He was neither in His body of flesh, nor in His glorified body. When, however, on His ascension, He became a life-giving Spirit, in the power of the Spirit He came to us to justify us, as He had been justified. Hence the force of St. Paul's expressions concerning "the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward that believe according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead ;" and the blessedness of "knowing Him and the power of His resurrection ;" and again our being "made alive together with Christ, and raised up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." At the final and solemn meeting with His disciples before His crucifixion to which I have alluded in a previous dissertation, our Lord said, "And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, for He dwelleth *with* you and shall be *in* you."

Our Lord had already declared His oneness with the Father, but who was this "Comforter," this "Spirit of Truth," who was then dwelling with the disciples and was to be *in* them? Was it another Divine Person? The question is answered in the very next verse, "I will not leave you comfortless : *I will come to you*. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more ; but ye see me : because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, *and I in you*." Yes ! He who had said to Thomas, "I am the *Way* and the *Truth* and the *Life*," as a Life-giv-

ing Spirit, was to come and *guide* into all truth. His disciples had enjoyed His visible and bodily presence, but He was to make a nearer approach ; after His ascension they were to have a Comforter, an invisible, spiritual presence within them ; or more definitely, the indwelling of the Almighty Father who was the Divine principle within Him, and whose communication to the faithful as a Quickening Spirit, was to be effected through the mediation of the humanity He was to glorify. This truth is forcibly expressed by St. Iraneus in these words : “As the light of the Father entered into the humanity of the Lord, so it comes beaming forth from Him on us, and now He in his humanity is the fountain of the Holy Spirit for all who believe in Him.” And so it is written “the first man Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam was made a *quickeningspirit*. The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is the Lord from Heaven.” Here I would speak again of the use of the word “person” as a theological distinction which, it is very clear to me, is operating a sad corruption and depression in our modern piety, even if originally there was nothing false in the term ; for we have now taken it practically by raising a scheme of dogma based, although not confessedly so, on Tritheistic principles. Such theology confuses and distracts the mind, and runs into contradictions against the plain teachings of the Bible and reason ; and when carried out to its legitimate conclusions contradicts itself. It requires the most skilful and agile metaphysician to defend it, and the greatest ability to say one thing and mean another, and the most remarkable facility in forgetting one side of the question, while the other is advocated. Theologians insist on the distinct personality of the Spirit, but raise at the same time a scheme of dogma which reduces Him to a something literally purchased for us, or a more causative

agency. The exigencies of theology must be hard pressing indeed that can turn this sweet and blessed doctrine aside, of a cleansing, comforting and life-giving power, pulsing into the soul from a Divine Saviour, brought near to the disciple by a personal communion and lowly faith, for that strange riddle of the understanding, a Third Person in the Trinity coming and going between God and man. This manifestly is not the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures, but the Holy Spirit rather of the schools. The Holy Spirit is not a mere abstract influence; it is the Blood of the Lamb that cleanses us from all sin. It is the water of life, which becomes a well of water, springing up into eternal life, in every heart which receives it. It is the bread of life, which cometh down from heaven, that man may eat thereof, and not die. It is the Divine Truth which sanctifies us, and fills the understanding with heavenly light. It is a heavenly divine life, germinating within us, and when its work is fully completed in us, when by its assistance constantly given, we have laid down our natural, evil life, when we have been born again by the regenerating influences of this Holy Spirit; when we have been created anew into Christ's image and likeness; then we shall become the sons of God, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you. For if ye live after the

flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Thus we are to believe that by a life-giving communion and fellowship with Christ, is effected the remission (renunciation) of sin, and reconciliation and at-onement with God. It is by having Christ, who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, dwelling within us, as an ever-active and vital energy or principle of mediation, that we have acceptance with God and the hope of glory ; and so we read : " This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord : *I will put my law into their hearts, and in their minds* will I write them, and [as a sequence] their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Now, where remission (renunciation) of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Thus, justification results from a real unity, an at-one-ment. It is no mere moral influence theory ; it is no satisfaction or governmental theory ; it is no disentanglement of merely legal difficulties ; it is no contract between three parties, who are yet but one ; it involves no verbal quibbles, calling men good, when they have only been saved from the just deserts of their sins by the punishment of the innocent. The sin itself is forgiven, that is, given up ; it is remitted, that is, rejected, cast out from the soul. Man is purged of the corruption of sin by the blood of Christ ; for the spirit of truth is that blood which He has shed, is now shedding, and ever will shed, for the regeneration and life of men. The Lord's merits are not imputed, not transferred to our account, as the merchant transfers accounts in his ledger, but His life is transferred into our souls and becomes our life, not by a legal fiction, or any metaphysical subtilty, but by its reception into our wills and understandings, into our thoughts and deeds. It becomes our life, as the bread we eat and the water we drink become the bone and

muscle, the flesh and blood, the substance and strength, of our material bodies, when they are incorporated into our forms.

Our Lord said in His promise of the Comforter, "I will come to you," and to His Apostles, "Lo, I am with you always." And this is said, evidently, that we may conceive the Holy Spirit in some proper sense. Christ Himself with us always, in all the feeling of Jesus, breathing His love and life in every fibre of our inner man. The word is nigh unto us, even in our mouth and heart. The Christ of the garden and the cross is with us, suing at our heart, and striving to communicate all that we could hope from the love of Gethsemane and Calvary. I think I sometimes detect in the language and writings even of those who claim exceptional fidelity to the orthodox and evangelical creed, unambiguous proof that they have a most inadequate sense of the exceeding majesty of the Son of God. They speak of Him with a fondling affection which is inconsistent with true reverence. They are always "lying on His breast," but they never fall at His feet with wonder and with fear. Their faith in His sympathy with them in their sorrow is most real, but there is no such awe as must come from a deep and vivid sense of His authority as the incarnate God and the great King of Kings and Lord of Lords. They are so interested in His human development, so fascinated with the ethical perfection of his character, His tenderness with the infirmities of men, His merciful words to those who have grievously sinned, the charm of His home friendship, the tears which He shed over Jerusalem, and the agony which came upon Him in the garden, that they absolutely and habitually ignore the fact of His second coming and invisible presence in power and majesty. They seem unconscious that He who ascended up out of sight has come again to His Church, unseen, excepting through the eye of faith, in power and not in

weakness, with the sceptre and not the sin-offering, not to secure redemption, but bestow it, not to lay the foundation in sacerdotal sorrow, but to erect the fabric with sovereign strength. The sacrifice of Christ was His flesh for the life of the world, and so at His first advent He came and lived and died visibly. But the kingdom of Christ is an invisible kingdom, and cometh not with outward show. The scribes of Christ's day said that Elijah was yet to come. If many in the Church have long been blind to the actual advent of the King, we must not be blind also. If many Christians erroneously look for a visible second advent, for a King that tarries long, instead of coming quickly ; for a kingdom localized at Jerusalem, as specialized in Palestine, instead of catholicized in a cosmical brotherhood, why should this confound us? Christendom has always had its fragmentary divisions and diversities. It is true that in His love for us, and in His eagerness for our salvation, the Lord of Glory descended from the throne of God to the low level of our human life, but it is not for us to withhold the homage He voluntarily surrendered when He was visibly present among men. It is not for us to prolong His humiliation, and keep Him uncrowned. As our Priest, He died for us to procure salvation ; as our King, He reigns over us to bestow it. He died sacerdotally for us, and we may be saved ; when He sovereignly lives in us, we are saved.

According to the Scriptures, Christ rose from the dead by His own power, yet the Holy Ghost is said to have raised Him. The Word of God descended into the Virgin's womb, and found Himself a human tabernacle, yet the being so born was conceived of the Holy Ghost. I call your attention to this to show how little countenance Holy Scripture gives for the metaphysical tri-personal distinctions of sectarian theology, before proceeding to comment

on several important texts bearing on the subject under review, and which tend to prove that our ascended Lord, by ascending, has returned to us invisibly as a Spirit. Consider St. Paul's words: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earth, earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." And, recollect, this is said in answer to the question, "With what body do the dead come? But objection might be made then, as now, that since the component particles of our bodies are ever changing during life, since on death they are dissipated to the four winds, the *same* body cannot be raised; what is meant, then, by its being called the *same* body? St. Paul answers that it will be the same body in the sense that a blade of wheat is the same with the seed; being contained within it, and at length developed. So also there is a natural body, and a spiritual body; and the natural body comes first, as the seed does. The spiritual body—how or what we know not—is formed within it, the same as it, yet different in its accidents. Corruption, dissolution, mortality, are but the accidents of the Christian's body, and are separated from it forever on its rising again. What we see is not the real body; it is but the outward shell; the real body of the regenerate will not be a material, but a spiritual substance, of which the seed is now deposited within us. The Apostle then goes on to say how this takes place, viz., by a new birth from Christ. The first man Adam was of the earth, earthy; and all who are born from Him are earthy like him. Such is the generation of those who are born after the flesh. But the second man is not merely living, but life-giving. He is a "quick-

ening [or life-giving] Spirit ;" the very words (be it observed) which our Saviour had used in His discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, when He said, "It is the Spirit that is the life-giver." As we derive our carnal and mortal nature from Adam, so the life-giving Spirit is the seed and principle of spiritual bodies to all who are His. "Flesh and blood," says the Apostle, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Here, too, is a parallel to our Lord's words : "The flesh profiteth nothing." And further, as our Lord at Capernaum referred to His ascension and exaltation, so here again the life-giving Spirit is said to be "the Lord from heaven." Thus this passage, equally with the record of our Lord's words by St. John, speaks of our ascended Lord as a Spirit present in His people, and that apparently because He has ascended. Another passage of the same description, though the ascension is not mentioned, is St. Paul's declaration to the Corinthians, that "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." Taking these words in their context, they have a remarkable force in showing the extent of our Lord's condescension towards us under the Gospel. But I quote them here in order to point out that the gift of the Spirit is none other than the entrance into us of the ascended and invisible Saviour. To be joined as one to Christ, and to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, are spoken of as the same gift. It is to be observed, moreover, that St. Paul, who here speaks of Christ as a Spirit, elsewhere speaks of Him as still possessed of a bodily substance, and as communicating Himself to us as such. "We are members of His body, *of His flesh, and of His bones.*" Another remarkable text of the same kind occurs where St. Paul, after describing the "glorious ministration of the Spirit," which is "righteousness," or justification, proceeds : "Now the Lord is that



Spirit ; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." I am not here concerned to explain the course of the Apostle's teaching in this chapter ; but it would appear on the face of it that the righteousness of the Gospel, which is also "liberty" and "glory," is also "ministered" to us by One who is first called "the Spirit," and then "the Lord" Christ. The manner, too, in which are interchanged the words, "the Spirit," "the Lord," and "the Spirit of the Lord," is very observable.

That our justification is connected in some unknown way with Christ's ascension and going out of sight, is also implied in His words concerning the Holy Ghost in His last discourse with His disciples. "When He is come, He will reprove," or convince, "the world of sin, because they believe not on me ; *of righteousness, because I go to my Father*, and ye see me no more," seems, I say, in accordance with the other texts quoted, to connect our justification with some mysterious necessity on the part of the Justifier, of removing from us His corporeal presence and coming to us invisibly. Before we can gain a true idea of the nature of His ascension, it is necessary to know that it does not mean any change in space, but a change in state. It consisted in the glorification of His human nature, or making it Divine. As He was in the world before His incarnation, as truly as He was after it, though not in form appreciable by the human senses, so He was in the world after His ascension, and is now, more fully than before it, though we cannot see His face or hear His voice. And here, perhaps, we may see the intimate connection between justification and faith. If justification, or the imparting of righteousness, be a work of the Holy Ghost, a spiritual gift or presence in the heart, it is plain that

faith, and faith alone, can discern it, and open the heart for its reception, as the Spirit alone can give it. While Christ was present in the flesh, He might be seen by the eye; but His more perfect and powerful presence, which we now enjoy, being invisible, can be discerned and used by faith only. We have no reason for supposing that the supernatural providences of God are not ordered upon a system of antecedents or second causes as precise as in the natural system any one thing is a necessary condition of another. The foundation is Jesus Christ; to faith is assigned the honorable task of finding the foundation and laying on it the first stone cemented in the tear of repentance. Yet this is the bare beginning. As theology is a science in which no one idea stands alone, but each is a link in an endless chain, reaching from first truths up to boundless demonstrations; so practical religion is also a holy chain—link fastened to link, Christ to faith, faith to hope, hope to charity, charity to holiness, holiness to heaven, heaven to Christ again in God. By this celestial chain, that reaches from this dark world to heaven, of which Christ crucified is the earthly anchorage, and Christ glorified the heavenly, with the long series of virtues and graces glittering between, we are to be drawn to God.

To the catholic heart, that a man is “justified by faith” is a most true and comfortable doctrine. But to fritter away this vast circle of truth into a mere belief in Christ as a Redeemer, and this again into a trust in His atonement; and this atonement again into a satisfaction to Divine justice; and this satisfaction, once more into mere suffering; and this faith itself concentrated into a single act of “casting the soul” upon this suffering for hope; and *Christ entirely unknown as the second Adam*, communicating from His body into ours, a quickening and transforming life, purifying our flesh by the same agencies or operations that

purified His ; this is a mode of teaching which we must regard as unsafe and soul-ruinous in the highest degree.

It is said in the Gospel according to St. Mark, "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was raised up into Heaven and sat on the right hand of God." Connecting this statement with another by the Apostle to the Hebrews, where it is declared of Jesus that "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," theologians have been in the habit of representing the Saviour as literally interceding with the Father for sinners, leading the same as a person intercedes with a king or an executive officer in behalf of others. This is a very false and gross idea of the intercession or mediation of our Blessed Lord, and He Himself gives the best of reasons for its being untrue. "At that day," our Lord said, referring to the period when He, having risen from the dead, would pour out His Holy Spirit upon his disciples ; "at that day, *I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you.*" Although no one is nearer to us than God, there are times when no one seems farther from us. It is state, not space, that gives the sense of separateness. When Jesus was in states of humiliation, as in temptation and suffering, it seemed to Him as if the Divine Father were a Being separate and remote from Himself, for He was then governed by the finite consciousness of His humanity. But our Lord Himself does not and cannot now offer intercessory prayer as He did upon earth, although He still prays *in* us, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. That Divine influence, which descended into His own frail Humanity, and ascended from His human heart and lips in real and earnest prayer, comes down from His glorified humanity, that it may ascend from our lips to Him, as, in his humiliation, His

ascended to the Father. It is a doctrine of Holy Scripture that God is the Inspirer as well as the Author of prayer. No prayer can ascend to heaven but that which has come down from heaven, but the Divine inflatus must clothe itself with human thought, as it of necessity did, when it came down into the finite faculties which our Lord had assumed.

The subject of the intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is not a doctrine presented very prominently in the Scriptures, being only mentioned in two places in the New Testament. But on these two passages I think very extravagant conclusions have been founded, although doubtless the popular view of the subject is much modified at the present day. The true idea of mediation, is not that which exists between one person and another, but that of an instrumentality provided for the accomplishment of some purpose, which could not be effected without it. There is no idea of praying or pleading, or persuading or propitiating God to do what he dislikes to do. The whole plan consists in simply providing the means, a mediation by which He can accomplish the benign purposes of His infinite love. The glorified humanity of our Lord is that medium. It intercedes, that is, it goes between the sinner and God—for this is the true meaning of intercession. God thus in His work of grace, as in all His works, for some inscrutable reason, restricts Himself to certain conditions and instrumentalities to accomplish His ends. And here, in conclusion, I am led to suggest the sense of another text, which has no great obscurity on the face of it, yet seems to mean more than cursory readers are apt to consider. I mean St. Paul's words to the Colossians,—“Your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Now when we come to consider these words are they not harsh and strange, if they mean merely what the popular way of viewing

them in our day represents. If life means what men at present are content that it should mean, the life of religion and devotion, "spiritual mindedness," (as it is sometimes called,) is it not a very violent phrase to say "it is hid in God?" Is it not irreverent taken literally? Can it be made reverent without explaining away its wording? If, however, the foregoing remarks be admitted as true, we are able to take this and similar statements of Scripture literally. For it would seem that, in truth, the principle of our spiritual existence is Divine, is an ineffable presence of God. Christ who promised to make all His disciples one in God with Him, who promised that we should be in God and God in us, has made us so,—has in some mysterious way accomplished for us this great work, this stupendous privilege. It would seem moreover, as I have said, that He has done so by ascending to the Father; that His ascent bodily is His descent spiritually; that His taking our nature up to God is the descent of God into us; that he has truly, though in an unknown sense, taken us to God, or brought down God to us, as we view it. Thus when St. Paul says that our life is hid with Him in God, we may suppose Him to intimate that our principle of existence is no longer a mortal earthly principle, such as we derive from Adam, but that we are baptized and hidden in God's glory—that we are transformed, spiritualized, glorified in the Divine nature—that through the participation of Christ; we receive as through a channel, the true presence of God within and without us imbuing us with sanctity and immortality. *This*, I repeat is our justification, our ascent through Christ to God, or God's descent through Christ to us; we may call it either of the two; we ascend into Him; He descends into us; we are in Him, He in us; Christ being the One Mediator, the way, the truth and the life, joining earth with Heaven. And this

is our true Righteousness,—not the mere name of righteousness, not only forgiveness or favor as an act of God's mind, not only sanctification within (great indeed as these blessings would be, yet it is somewhat more), it implies the one, it involves the other, it is the indwelling of our glorified Lord, “even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; *which is Christ IN US the hope of glory.*”

This is the one great gift of God secured by the Atonement which is power instead of weakness, bondage and suffering—which is light and life instead of darkness and the shadow of death.

THE CHURCH.

I have already spoken of the natural body which our Lord assumed, and of His glorified and spiritual body ; I would now speak of His Mystical body, the church which He established to minister Himself and His Atonement to men. Our adorable Lord before His ascension to heaven, did not teach all who were to be taught ; nor feed all who were to be fed ; nor bless all that were to be blessed ; nor suffer all that was to be suffered for the world's redemption. Christ soon went out from Himself into the twelve, the seventy, the hundred and twenty, the three thousand, the Universal Church, to multiply and replenish the earth. Do we sufficiently realize all that is contained in the privilege of being in communion of the church ? If Christ's Church be in truth His Body, if to be in communion with the Church, is indeed to be in communion with Christ, what a glorious privilege God has given us in His Church ? We who are ingrafted into it are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones, as truly as we are of the first man, and by this blessed union, we derive our life through the quickening Spirit. We are His eyes to look around and weep with those that weep ; His feet to go from scene to scene of want and sorrow ; His hands to distribute bread among the poor, and to be laid in

blessing on the heads of little ones ; His ears to hear the cry of distress along the wayside ; His lips to teach, console and save ; in a word we are a Royal Priesthood to “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, * * for His body’s sake, which is the church.” Nearly half our Lord’s teachings was about the church that was upon the eve of being established upon the earth. Many of his parables were designed to teach people what it was to be like. It was to be like the estate of an absent landlord, showing that Christ would not reign visibly over His church. It was to be like the mustard seed, showing how it was to grow from a very small beginning. It was to be like a net, taking good and bad fish ; a field sown with good and bad seed ; a marriage feast, where some had not a wedding garment, showing that in this world, the members of the church would be a mingled company of good and bad. All this was to the multitude. To the Apostles, Christ spoke of the future government of His Church ; how there was to be a sign and seal of admission, namely, baptism ; how those who were baptised were to be bound together in communion with each other and with Christ by the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper ; how he meant to establish in His church a ministry of reconciliation, to preach to the world remission of sins through repentance and faith ; how they and their successors were to have committed to them the keys of heaven in the dispensation of the varied ordinances and means of grace of His Church ; how the Holy Ghost would dwell in his Church, as in His Temple, and guide them into all truth ; how he would never withdraw His presence to the end of the world ; and how the gates of hell should never prevail against it.

Such was Christ’s teaching about His future church, before His death, In the great forty days that followed His resurrection, we

are told that He spoke "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"—giving "commandments" about it to His Apostles. What these more particular instructions of the organization of the church were, we are not strictly told ; but indirectly we may learn what they were, by watching the manner in which the Apostles gave them effect. The day of Pentecost was, so to speak, the birthday of the church. On that day the foundation of the everlasting temple promised to David was laid. Its corner-stone had, it is true, been laid by the great builder, while yet He was on earth, but until the day of Pentecost the church was a body without a soul—a temple without illumination. Then came light into the temple. Glorious and mighty was the operation of that power whereby in the beginning of time, chaos was illuminated, and stood forth in the glory of a perfected universe, but more grand than that was the sudden illumination of the sons of men by their Creator. The first coming of the Holy Ghost was a visible coming, because He came to send forth on its glorious career the visible Church of God. It was God's last and nearest visible approach to the sons of men. Grounded in the predeterminate councils of the Father, Redeemed by the blood of the Son, sanctified by the indwelling Spirit ; the church could have but one Lord, one faith, one baptism. On that first generation of Christians and especially on those who were Apostles, or of Apostolic rank, was devolved a responsibility which has rested on no succeeding generation of Christians. That first age had to commit to writing and to fix for all time, the revelation which had been made to the world by Christ. The Pentecostal gift of extraordinary inspiration ceased with that first age, but our Lord's Apostles made provision to insure the preaching of true doctrine in all subsequent ages of the church. No attentive reader of the

New Testament can fail to see how carefully the ministry of the Word and Sacraments was hedged about. Our Lord did not commission all His disciples to be ministers of the gospel, but only chosen men whom He called Apostles. They were to preach, and baptize, and to break bread in remembrance of Him. After His resurrection, He gave them a more solemn commission, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And that His commission was not limited to the Apostles, but meant to extend to their successors also, He made plain by adding "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Most careful therefore, were the apostles to ordain Elders in every city, by the laying on of hands, who should continue this ministry in their absence, and after their death. In the New Dispensation as in the old, no man can undertake the priesthood except, "he be called of God." Accordingly St. Paul asks, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" and forbids the notion that all are legally entitled to preach, asking, "Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers?" So careful was he to provide for the ordination of qualified men as ministers, that when he could not visit a church himself for this purpose, we find him sending vicars—apostolic, to act for him, as Timothy to Ephesus, and Titus to Crete. From the instructions which he gave them, we learn that their chief function was their ordination of deacons and presbyters. They were to select, prove, examine, and by laying on of hands, commission these deacons and presbyters; and again and again he charges them to deliver to these younger ministers, the same sound form of words, the same sound doctrine which they (Timothy and Titus) had received from the apostles at their own ordination. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.

* * * That good thing which was committed unto thee,

keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. And the nights that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

From the pastoral epistles it clearly appears that Timothy and Titus held a grade of ministry superior to and distinct from that of the presbyters and deacons whom they are commissioned to ordain. Whether this highest grade received then, or a generation later, the distinctive name of bishops is unimportant ; and whether now they be called bishops or chief pastors, or chief presbyters, is unimportant, provided apostolic order is maintained. The early fathers, in arguing with heretics, appeal again and again to the *continuity* of the Christian ministry as a very important feature in the polity of the church. There are always some who chafe under these wise restrictions, who would relax all rules, admit all to be ministers. Not so Christ's apostles. They would have none who were not duly approved and commissioned to take upon them this ministry. To the inspired foresight we owe it that this sacred torch of Divine truth, and these sacraments of grace have been handed down to our later days. We cannot understand why God should employ any human or material means for the conveyance of his gifts to man ; but we read that the Israelites were cured of the serpent's bite *by means* of the brazen serpent ; Naaman was healed of the leprosy *by means* of the waters of Jordan ; the blind man in the ninth chapter of St. John had his sight restored *by means* of the pool of Siloam. And yet of all these intervening things, those words of the wisdom of Solomon are true : " He that turned towards it was not saved by the thing he saw, but by Thee that art the Saviour of all ! " And so with spiritual gifts. In His sacraments, our Lord has made an outward and visible sign a means of our receiving the grace. Not

that He might and does not impart the grace without the ordained sign, but that we have a distinct promise and security that if we faithfully do the outward thing, He will assuredly impart the inward. Nicodemus wished to know how a man could enter the kingdom of heaven. By being born again, Christ said. And how born again? "Born of water and of the spirit," was the reply. Nicodemus, afraid of losing caste if he professed Christianity openly, wished to have the inward and spiritual grace, without the outward and visible sign. But Christ insisted upon it. The water as well as the spirit was needful to the new birth. And so when charging His apostles to make disciples by baptizing, He added, "He that believeth *and is baptized*, shall be saved." If ever the outward sign might have been dispensed with, it would have been in the case of Cornelius, on whom the Holy Ghost had already descended; or in the case of Saul, who had been converted by the Lord himself. But no! Cornelius must now be baptized, was St. Peter's first thought. "Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," were the words of Ananias to Saul.

Twelve months before the institution of the Lord's Supper, our blessed Lord had spoken at some length of this inward spiritual feeding of His body and blood. The discourse is given in the sixth chapter of St. John. The whole of that discourse is anticipatory of that gift or grace of spiritual food which Christ intended to bequeath to His church; and which He was subsequently pleased to ensure to His church by a special form of conveyance in the Eucharist. Christ is first speaking to the Jews in their synagogue—in dark sayings as usual. They had asked for bread from heaven like that which Moses had given. Christ replies that God will give them the true bread from heaven, of which the

manna from the sky was only a type. He had come down from heaven. *He* was the true bread from heaven. The Jews murmur at our Lord's thus speaking of Himself as one who had come down from heaven. Our Lord replies that none can receive the truth of His divinity, unless he be "taught of God;" and that to those who thus receive Him, He will be (as He had before said), a life-giving food. "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever." At this point, namely in the 51st verse, our Lord introduces a new thought. His thought heretofore had been simply: "I am the bread,"—"he that eateth *me*." Now for the first time He mentions *flesh*, and two verses later, *flesh* and *blood*; and now for the first time He uses the future tense: "The bread that *I will* give is my *flesh* which I will give for the life of the world;" pointing to a definite time when He would give the world this bread, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." To the Jews in the Capernaum Synagogue, all this was unintelligible, and to them no further explanation was given. Afterwards, alone with His disciples, He finds that they had failed to understand Him. To them He vouchsafes an explanation. And first, of His having come down from heaven; that is, of His divinity. He promises them a convincing proof in His approaching ascension. Then as to the life-giving efficacy of His flesh, He explains the necessity of its sacrifice and consequent glorification. His mere flesh as it then was could have no such efficacy; it must be glorified and spiritualized. Then and then only could it be life-giving food. "The words I have been using," or rather, "the things I have been speaking of—Flesh and Blood—are Spirit and Life."

Thus we have in the Capernaum discourse, the doctrine of that

inward and spiritual feeding on Christ, of which the Eucharist (instituted twelve months afterwards) is our surest means and pledge. We close the sixth chapter of St. John, and open the passages that record the institution of the Lord's supper. Remembering (as His Apostles would also remember) His promise that He would bequeath to them this spiritual food, and wishing to solemnly ratify it, at supper the night before He suffered, our Lord took up what lay before Him on the table—the bread and the wine. He *broke* the bread (so was His body to be broken) and delivered it to each, saying, "Take, eat ; this is my body." He *poured forth* the wine (so was His blood to be shed) and delivered the cup to each, saying : " Drink ye all of it ; this is the blood of the New Covenant ;" or according to two of the four accounts, " This is the New Covenant in my Blood." His apostles could not fail to understand their Lord. While they saw Him thus solemnly place the bread in their hands, calling it His body and the cup calling it his blood of the covenant, they could not fail to understand that He was intending to make bread and wine whenever so used in remembrance of Him, not only sacred pledges and symbols, but means of grace whereby He would convey to His church in perpetuity the spiritual food which He had promised.

We have seen how our Lord ministers His salvation in and through the church, and it is no disparagement in the least to the salvation which it unquestionably promised within the church, that salvation is granted by Him on other terms. The grace bestowed through the sacraments of the church, the privileges conferred on her ministers, are real, not imaginary, positive, *but not exclusive*. I am a believer myself in their efficacy to the fullest extent. I am an utter disbeliever in there being any

promise whatever of exclusiveness attached to them. To appreciate this question we must begin by examining the commission or patent granted to the apostles themselves. It is as real, ample and permanent, as it well could be ; but I cannot discover a vestige of exclusiveness about it, as far as God is concerned. He guarantees them all that He confers upon them, without limitation, but He never limits Himself to act through them alone. On the contrary, there are distinct traces of a different intention on His part from the first. Take their earliest mission ; but read it in St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul,—the earliest who wrote more particularly for us Gentiles. “Then He called His twelve disciples together,” says St. Luke, “and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.” They departed on their mission shortly afterwards. What is announced in the sixth verse of the very next chapter? After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come ;” observing to them merely that “the harvest was great, and the laborers few ;” a truth, unfortunately, which has never ceased to be less true since the church began.

The twelve were not consulted in any way by Him on commissioning these new laborers ; the commission given to them was substantially their own repeated. The achievements of the seventy were rather of the two the more striking. Nor was this all by any means. Between the commissioning of the seventy and of the twelve, while the twelve were literally engaged on their first mission, they were confronted by a scene which caused them no small offence. “Master,” said St. John, evidently reminded of the occurrence by the last remark of his master, and what had

given rise to it, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us." And Jesus said unto him : "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." And St. Mark adds, "There is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me." Take a later privilege bestowed on the twelve. The privilege to which I allude was originally conferred upon one. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." No promise whatever at that time passed His lips to the eleven others. Two chapters later, for only St. Matthew records either incident, their turn came, St. Peter being with them, but without any more notice being taken of him, than of them previously. For without consulting or referring to him in any way, our Lord reiterated His promise to them in the exact words in which it had been made to St. Peter. These surely must be considered strong indications on His part to reserve to Himself freedom of action, so that while binding Himself to act at all times through His apostles and their successors, He abstained signally from binding Himself never to act excepting through them. What are we to infer from all this, but that union with Himself is what God has most at heart for us under the Gospel ; that union amongst ourselves is desired, aye, passionately desired by Him next, but only so far as it will subserve this. He would have all men to be saved. They should "come from the East and from the West, and sit down in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," whether Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew them or not. In all ages, "in every nation," said St. Peter, rising superior to his own prejudices, "he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with

Him." The very first sermon preached on behalf of the gospel contained these words: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." We may think it our duty to serve the Lord with the seventy in the tabernacle, but in the spirit of the great law-giver, we should say of those who, like Eldad and Medad, prophesy in the camp: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!" Faith is a child-like principle. It doesn't pick and choose. Such a faith does not depend upon numbers, or antiquity, or councils, or parliament; it sees the truth in light, and the truth makes it free; it will believe with two or three—it would believe if it were alone.

Some people only engage themselves about the Lord's death—that Christ died for them—is their whole religion. And truly that Christ died for us is an assurance of infinite love. But true faith opens the heart to all that the Lord is, to all that the Lord has done for us, and is doing for us now as the *living* Saviour, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords. God in Christ is the foundation truth of the Church. Thus the only confession required of the Ethiopian who applied to Philip for baptism was—"I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God." It was this great comprehensive truth, the holy Apostle Peter had confessed, when Jesus said to him, "On this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It has love, light, beauty, coherency, work and power, and the arbitrary claims of ecclesiastical dogmatism melt before it like the snow-flakes on the river—like the murky darkness before the rising day—like the mist before the sun. The confession of this truth made St. Peter not (petra) a rock but (petros) a *stone*. Every man

who receives this foundation truth, becomes also (*petros*) a stone. Hence St. Peter himself says of true Christians: "Ye also as living *stones* are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The Lord is the grand Rock, we are the derived stones. Our blessed Lord also said to St. Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," and exaggerated claims of ecclesiastical power have been based thereon. Every soul which receives the Saviour's truths in love, receives from Him the keys of Heaven. What are "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven?" Why the knowledge of such things as constitute heaven; knowledge lets us into the subject of which it treats; it opens it. It is a popular idea that hereafter there are to be two inclosures, one of which is salvation, and the other perdition, and that the soul prepared in the dying hour by absolution, finds entrance to heaven. But what have inclosures to do with it? The work of reconciliation is no external thing, but a work performed within. It comes from the blotting out of sin by the presence of God's own love, and words of absolution avail nothing, without this power working with us. Mere forgiveness of sin does not confer heaven, for there can be no blessedness without holiness, and there can be no holiness without a supreme love of what God loves, and a supreme hate of what God hates. Thus the question arises, can a man so disarrange his nature, as not to attain a permanent and predominant desire to be holy, and can omniscience force upon such a character heavenly blessedness? It is a maxim of a modern school of philosophy that unused powers become extinct, and that as a result of it, a new species is formed. Mr. Darwin says: "Give me time enough, and I will produce a new species; give me time enough, and I will produce any species."

Without assenting to Mr. Darwin's conclusions, we must admit the fact that tendencies multiply themselves. Our tendency is to crystalize our habits. Now, it is wholly conceivable that when a soul loves the right, and looks in the face of God, its aptitude to wrong-doing constantly decreases. Give time, and it shall be obliterated entirely. We shall have a new kind of being, a very archangel, utterly unable to commit sin. On the other hand, is it not conceivable that the tendencies of the wrong-doer to commit sin may become fixed : that all the right feeling within the heart may lose its power of resistance to evil forever, so that "if the tree fall toward the South or toward the North, there it shall be?" Whatever may be our convictions concerning these abstruse questions, there is no need of any material hell to inflict penalties for unbroken obedience. I am speaking of *deliberate* sin, of *sin against light*. If I were to speak of the heathen, or those who live in the slums of life, I should be compelled to use another kind of argument. The vital force may slumber in certain seeds for centuries, but let them once germinate, and they become subject to new and more perilous conditions of existence ; a few hours of neglect or drought would be destructive of all life within them. In like manner some of those who in this life never feel the sunshine of God's grace and truth, may have yet within them the gift of God through Jesus Christ—the germ of everlasting life, that in the hereafter may germinate into endless growth and fruition in holiness and heavenly bliss.

But although God does not restrict the grace of His salvation to the Church, what an inestimable privilege it is to be in communion with the holy Church which God in Christ has taken into covenant with Himself!—that blessed communion through which "earthly things are joined with heavenly, and things

visible and things invisible made one"—that unites the life of the Christian ages and gathers the hallowed memories of centuries ! Holding fast the truth of the Father, the Son our Saviour, the Holy Spirit, the Church universal, forgiveness, resurrection and eternal life, as set forth in the traditional "form of sound words ;" the Church is the same to-day as at first, in all its essential truth and fellowship. Preserving apostolic order and historical succession in its ministry, it is no invisible, inorganic thing. Embracing in its membership all of every creed and sect that are baptized into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to the ancient rule—"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity ;" the Church is not Greek, nor Roman, nor Protestant, but Catholic. Founded on the rock of Peter's confession—faith in the Incarnate God ; observing the simple symbolic, but sacred ordinances of His household, as they join us in the fellowship of love to God and man ; having the inspired and sure Word of God, untrammelled by sectarian glosses, as its charter, its unity is in its Divine Head—God in the image of man drawing all men to Himself by making them like Himself, or, as some theologians express it with a twist, clothing them in His righteousness. This is the unity that cannot be broken. It is something for all times, for all places, for all intellects, for all hearts. This is the sacred bone of the Church, "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." To this Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, this blessed communion of Saints, uniting earth with heaven, the living and the dead, is the promise given, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Circling the earth with its sympathies, conquering the world by its earnestness, and weaving for the King when He shall return in His beauty with His spouse, a woof of hearts reaching back through all time, and con-

veying in all its threads, the electric fire first kindled at the cross and communicated to the twelve.

Scientific inroads, some fear, are going to touch religion. They are going to touch it. It is vain to shut our eyes in this matter. There is a revolution impending, and it is impossible to say that the modern revelations of science, and the old Christian theories can co-exist. But true Christian holiness, gentleness, honor, love—the Kingdom of God that is within—science will not disturb. The Church of God must endure forever, and grow and cover the earth. There will be ebbings and flowings, and in his human frailty the Christian may be more or less despondent, or raised by these ; but he knows that whatever else may happen, the time will certainly come when “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Before the rising tide of the broad ocean of *Catholic-Evangelic-Truth*, the petty barriers of sect and schism will be swept away, like the foot prints on the shore. The final purpose of God in the creation, is to form a heaven of human beings, who can become the recipients of His life and blessedness forever. There is a human link in the chain of causes and effects, through which the Divine power reaches its ends and accomplishes its purpose, but we may rest assured that God will complete what he has graciously begun.

In these dissertations I have resisted doctrines that seem to me essentially false and of evil tendency, but I have also resisted some doctrines simply on the ground that they were questions, the solution of which belongs to a future world. The Church coming down through the centuries, has gathered up an endless number of formularies and confessions, and I would not dispute their usefulness, but the relative emphasis of these outward instrumentalities in the minds of men. They are advocated and

defended with such ardor and universality, that it would seem as if such things were regarded as of transcendent importance. But they are not the centre, not the main thing, they are incidental, collateral, auxiliary, and if there be nothing else but these, there is nothing.

The Church is made a fetich, when attendance there is made a substitute for Christian life. The Lord's Supper is made a fetich when consecrated bread is made to do duty for a consecrated heart. The creed and formula are made a fetich when they are allowed to stand between us and the Bible. The Bible itself is made a fetich, when it is allowed to stand between us and God ; when the letter is put in the place of the spirit, when the lamp is made an idol of, instead of being used as a light to guide our steps. The Bible, the Church, the Sacraments, the Creeds and Catechisms of every name, are to be judged by their fitness to make men good, to bring men into living communion with God, into Christian fellowship with one another, and into harmony with the spiritual laws of the universe.



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